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CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHY.

LIFE OF THE

REV. SAMUEL PEARCE,

OF BIRMINGHAM.

BY REV. A. [Andrew] FULLER.

Religious Tract Society,

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LIFE OF

REV. SAMUEL PEARCE.*

CHAPTER I.—*Parentage of Mr. Pearce. His conversion. His call to the Ministry, and settlement at Birmingham.*

MR. SAMUEL PEARCE was born at Plymouth, on July the 20th, 1766. His father was a respectable silversmith, and many years a deacon of the Baptist church in that place.

When a child, he lived with his grandfather, who was very fond of him, and endeavoured to impress his mind with the principles of religion. At about eight or nine years of age, he came home to his father, with a view of learning his business. As he advanced in life, his evil propensities, as he said, began to ripen; and, forming connexions with several vicious schoolfellows, he became more and more corrupted. So greatly was his heart at this time set in him to do evil, that had it not been for the restraining goodness of God, which somehow, he knew not how, preserved him in most instances from carrying his wicked inclinations into practice, he supposed he should have been utterly ruined.

At times he was under strong convictions, which rendered him miserable: but at other times they subsided, and then he would return with eagerness to his sinful pursuits. When about fifteen years old, he was sent by his father to enquire after the welfare of a person in the neighbourhood, in dying circumstances,

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* In this edition a few omissions of temporary matter have been made, and some letters published with Dr. Ryland's funeral sermon have been inserted according to their dates.

who (though before his departure, he was brought into a happy state of mind) at that time was sinking into deep despair. While in the room of the dying man, he heard him cry out with inexpressible agony of spirit, "I am damned for ever!" These awful words pierced his soul, and he felt a resolution at the time to serve the Lord; but the impression soon wore off, and he again returned to folly.

When about sixteen years of age, it pleased God effectually to turn him to himself. A sermon delivered by Mr. Birt, who was then co-pastor with Mr. Gibbs, of the Baptist church at Plymouth, was the first means of impressing his heart with a sense of his lost condition, and of directing him to the gospel remedy. The change in him appears to have been sudden, but effectual; and though his vicious propensities were bitter to his recollection, yet being now sensibly subdued, he was furnished with so much the clearer evidence that the work was of God. "I believe," he says, "few conversions were more joyful. The change produced in my views, feelings, and conduct, was so evident to myself, that I could no more doubt of its being from God, than of my existence. I had the witness in myself, and was filled with peace and joy unspeakable."

His feelings being naturally strong, and receiving a new direction, he entered into religion with all his heart; but not having known the devices of Satan, his soul was injured by its own ardour, and he was thrown into great perplexity. Having read Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul,' he determined formally to dedicate himself to the Lord, in the manner recommended in the seventeenth chapter of that work. The form of a covenant, as there drawn up, he also adopted as his own: and, that he might bind himself in the most solemn and affecting manner, signed it with his blood! But afterwards, failing in his engagements, he was plunged

into great distress, and almost into despair. On a review of his covenant, he seems to have accused himself of a pharisaical reliance upon the strength of his own resolutions; and therefore, taking the paper to the top of his father's house, he tore it into small pieces, and threw it from him to be scattered by the wind. He did not, however, consider his obligation to be the Lord's as hereby nullified; but feeling more suspicion of himself, he depended solely upon the blood of the cross.

After this he was baptized, and became a member of the Baptist church at Plymouth, the ministers and members of which, in a few years, perceived in him talents for public work. Being solicited by both his pastors, he exercised as a probationer, and receiving an unanimous call from the church, entered on the work of the ministry in November, 1786. Soon after this, he went to the academy at Bristol, then under the superintendance of Dr. Caleb Evans.

Mr. Birt, then pastor of the Baptist church in the square, Plymouth Dock, in a letter to the compiler of these memoirs, thus speaks of him:—"Though he was, so far as I know, the very first fruits of my ministry, on my coming hither, and though our friendship and affection for each other were great and constant; yet, previous to his going to Bristol, I had but few opportunities of conversing with him, or of making particular observations on him. All who best knew him, however, will remember, and must tenderly speak of his loving deportment; and those who attended the conferences with him, soon received the most impressive intimations of his future eminence as a minister of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Very few" adds Mr. Birt, "have entered upon, and gone through their religious profession with more exalted piety, or warmer zeal, than Samuel Pearce; and as few have exceeded him in the possession and display of that charity, which 'suffereth long, and is kind

that envieth not, that vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up, that doth not behave itself unseemly, that seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, that beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.' But why should I say this to you? You knew him yourself."

While at the academy he was much distinguished by the amiableness of his spirit and behaviour. It is sometimes observable, that when the talents of a young man are admired by his friends, and his early efforts flattered by crowded auditories, effects have been produced, which have proved fatal to his future respectability and usefulness. But this was not the case with Mr. Pearce. Notwithstanding the popularity, which even at that early period attended his ministerial exercises, his tutors have more than once remarked, that he never appeared to them to be in the least elated, or to have neglected his proper studies; but was uniformly the serious, industrious, docile, modest, and unassuming young man.

Towards the latter end of 1789, he came to the church in Cannon Street, Birmingham, to whom he was recommended by the Rev. Robert Hall, at that time one of his tutors. After preaching to them awhile on probation, he was chosen to be their pastor. His ordination was in August, 1790. Dr. Evans gave the charge, and the late venerable Mr. Hall, of Arnsby, delivered an address to the church on the occasion.

About two months after this, he wrote to his friend Mr. Summers. Whether the sentiments contained in that letter arose from the recollection of his late solemn engagement is uncertain: but they were certainly very appropriate to the occasion. Requesting his friend to pray for him, he says:—" Paul speaks of blessings received through the prayers of his fellow-christians. no wonder, therefore, he so often solicits their continuance. But if it be well to be interested in the prayers of fellow-christians, how much more

to believe the great High Priest of our profession, Jesus the Son of God, is gone into the holy of holies, with our names on his breast-plate, ever to plead in the presence of God for us—for us: oh, transporting thought! Who can doubt of the success of such an intercessor?

"I have of late had my mind very pleasantly, and, I hope, profitably exercised on this subject, more than ever, and find increasing pleasure from a well-grounded faith in the divinity of my incarnate Advocate. I see the glory of his office, arising from the infinite extent of his knowledge, power, and love, as well as from the efficacy of his atoning sacrifice. I do not wonder at those men, who deny the priestly office of Christ, when they have refused him the honours of Deity. I rejoice that he who pleads for us knows our wants individually, as well as the necessities of the whole church collectively. Through his intercession alone I expect my sins to be pardoned, my services accepted, and my soul preserved, guided, and comforted: and, with confidence in his intercession, I cannot doubt but I shall enjoy all. Oh how sweet is it, my dear friend, to exercise a lively faith in a living Saviour! May you and I do this daily. Thus for us to live will be Christ, and to die gain: living or dying, we shall be the Lord's."

In this early stage of his ministry, redemption by the blood of Christ appears to have been his chosen theme. Writing to the same friend as above, on Sept. 30, 1791, he says:—"I have for my evening discourse the best subject in all the Bible—redemption. Ephes. i, 7. How welcome to the captive! Forgiveness, how delightful to the guilty! Grace, pleasing to the heart of a saved sinner! O my dear friend, how much do we lose of gospel blessings, for want of realizing our personal concerns with them. Hence it is that we are no more humble, thankful, watchful, prayerful, joyful.

We view the glories of the gospel at a distance; and for want of that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, think too lightly of them. Lord increase our faith!"

About a month after this, he was married to Miss Sarah Hopkins, daughter of Mr. Joshua Hopkins, of Alcester—a connexion which appears to have been all along a source of great enjoyment to him. The following lines addressed to Mrs. Pearce when he was on a journey a little less than a year after their marriage, seem to be no more than a common letter: yet they show, not only the tenderness of his affection, but his heavenly-mindedness, his gentle manner of persuading, and how every argument was fetched from religion, and every incident improved for introducing it:—

Chipping Norton, August 15, 1792.

"I believe, on retrospection, that I have hitherto rather anticipated the proposed time of my return, than delayed the interview with my dear Sarah for an hour. But what shall I say, my love, now to reconcile you to my procrastinating my return for several days more? Why, I will say, it appears I am called of God; and I trust the piety of both of us will submit, and say, 'Thy will be done.' All is good that comes from him, and all is done right which is done in obedience to him. O to be perfectly resigned to his disposal—how good is it! May you, my dearest Sarah, and myself, daily prove the sweetness of this pious frame of soul: then all our duties will be sweet, all our trials will be light, all our pleasures will be pure, and all our hopes sanctified.

This evening I hope to be at Northampton. Let your prayers assist my efforts on the ensuing sabbath. You will, I trust, find in Mr. R. a ship richly laden with spiritual treasures. O for more supplies from the exhaustless mines of grace!

The soul of Mr. Pearce was formed for friendship: it was natural therefore to suppose, that, while engaging in the pursuit of his studies at the academy, he would contract religious intimacies with some of his brethren; and it is worthy of notice, that the grand cement of his friendship was kindred piety. In the two following letters, addressed to his friend, Mr. Steadman, the reader will perceive the justness of this remark, as well as the encouraging prospects which soon attended his labours at Birmingham.

May 9, 1792.

"I have nothing to lament but an insensible, ungrateful heart, and that is sufficient cause for lamentation. This, only this, bows me down; and under this pressure I am ready to adopt the words I preached from last evening; 'O that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away, and be at rest!'

As a people, we are generally united: I believe more so than most churches of the same dimensions. Our number of members is about two hundred and ninety-five, between forty and fifty of whom have joined us since I saw you, and most of them I have the happiness of considering as my children in the faith. There is still a crying out amongst us after salvation; and still, through much grace, it is my happiness to point them to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.

In preaching, I have often peculiar liberty; at other times I am barren. I suppose my experience is like that of most of my brethren; but I am not weary of my work. I hope still that I am willing to spend and be spent, so that I may win souls to Christ, and finish my course with joy. But I want more heart religion; I want a more habitual sense of the divine presence: I want to walk with God as Enoch walked. There is nothing that grieves me so much, or brings so much darkness

on my soul, as my little spirituality, and frequent wanderings in secret prayer. I cannot neglect the duty but it is seldom that I enjoy it.

'Ye that love the Lord indeed,
Tell me, is it so with you?'

When I come to the house of God, I pray and preach with freedom. Then I think the presence of the people seems to weigh more with me than the presence of God, and deem myself a hypocrite, almost ready to leave my pulpit for some more pious preacher. But the Lord does own the word; and again I say, if I go to hell myself, I will do what I can to keep others from going thither; and so in the strength of the Lord I will.

An observation once made to me helps to support me above water: 'If you did not plow in your closet, you would not reap in the pulpit.' And again I think, the Lord dwelleth in Zion, and loveth it more than the dwellings of Jacob."

There are few, if any, thinking men but who at some seasons have had their minds perplexed with regard to religious principles, even those which are of the greatest importance. In the end, however, where the heart is right, such exercises commonly issue in a more decided attachment to the truth. Thus it was with Mr. Pearce. In another part of the above letter, he thus writes to his friend Steadman: "I have, since I saw you, been much perplexed about some doctrinal points, both Arminian and Socinian, I believe through reading very attentively, but without sufficient dependence on the Spirit of truth, several controversies on those subjects; particularly the writings of Whitby, Priestley, and others. Indeed, had the state of mind I was in about ten weeks since continued, I should have been incapable of preaching with comfort at all. But in the mount of the Lord will he be seen. Just

as I thought of giving up, He who hath the hearts of all men in his hand, and turneth them as the rivers of water are turned, was pleased, by a merciful though afflicting providence, to set me at a happy liberty.

"I was violently seized with a disorder very common here, and which carried off many, supposed to be an inflammation in the bowels. One sabbath evening I felt such alarming symptoms, that I did not expect to see Monday morning. In these circumstances I realized the feelings of a dying man. My mind had been so accustomed to reflect on virtue and moral goodness, that the first thing I attempted was a survey of my own conduct; my diligence and faithfulness in the ministry, my unspotted life, &c. But, ah! vain props these for dying men to rest on! Such heart-sins, such corruptions, such evil propensities, recurred to my mind, that if ever I knew the moment when I felt my own righteousness to be as loathsome and filthy rags, it was then. And where should I, where could I, where did I flee, but to Him whose glory and grace I had been of late degrading, at least in my thoughts? Yes, then I saw peace for guilty consciences was to be alone obtained through an almighty Saviour. And oh, wonderful to tell! I again came to him; nor was I sent away without the blessing. I found him full of all compassion, ready to receive the most ungrateful of men.

'Oh to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!'

Thus, my dear brother, was the snare broken, and thus I escaped.

'A debtor to mercy alone,
Of covenant mercy I sing.'

Join with me in praising Him who remembered me in my low estate, because his mercy endureth for ever. Yet this is among the "all things."—Rom. viii. 28. I have found that it has made me more spiritual in preaching

I have prized the gospel more than ever, and hope it will be the means of guarding me against future temptations."

From his first coming to Birmingham, his meekness and patience were put to the trial by an antinomian spirit, which infected many individuals, both in and out of his congregation. It is well known with what affection it was his practice to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God, and to exhort christians to the exercise of practical godliness: but these were things which they could not endure. Soothing doctrine was all they desired. Therefore it was that his ministry was traduced by them, and treated with neglect and contempt. But, like his divine Master, he bore the contradiction of sinners against himself, and this, while he had the strongest satisfaction, that in those very things to which they objected, he was pleasing God. And though he plainly perceived the pernicious influence of their principles upon their own minds, as well as the minds of others, yet he treated them with great gentleness and long forbearance: and when it became necessary to exclude such of this description as were in communion with him, it was with the greatest reluctance that he came into that measure, and not without having first tried all other means in vain. He was not apt to deal in harsh language; yet, in one of his letters, about that time, he speaks of the principles and spirit of these people as a "cursed leaven."

Among his numerous religious friendships, he seems to have formed one for the special purpose of spiritual improvement. This was with Mr. Summers, of London, who often accompanied him in his journies; to whom, therefore, it might be expected he would open his heart without reserve. Here, it is true, we sometimes see him, like his brethren, groaning under darkness, want of spirituality, and the remains of indwelling sin; but frequently rising above all, as into his native element, and pouring forth his ardent soul

in expressions of joy and praise. On August 19, 1793, he writes thus :—

"When I take my pen to pursue my correspondence with you, I have no concern but to communicate something which may answer the same end we propose in our annual journies ; namely, lending some assistance in the important object of getting and keeping nearer to God. This, I am persuaded, is the mark at which we should be continually aiming, nor rest satisfied until we attain that to which we aspire. I am really ashamed of myself, when, on the one hand, I review the time that has elapsed since I first assumed the christian name, with the opportunities of improvement in godliness which have crowded on my moments since that period ; and when, on the other, I feel the little advance I have made ! More light, to be sure, I have ; but light without heat leaves the christian half dissatisfied. Yesterday, I preached on the duty of engagedness in God's service, from Jer. xxx. 21. 'Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me ? saith the Lord.' (A text for which I am indebted to our last journey.) While urging the necessity of heart religion, including sincerity and ardour, I found myself much assisted by reflecting on the ardour which our dear Redeemer discovered in the cause of sinners. Ah ! I could not help saying, If our Saviour had measured his intenseness in his engagements for us, by our fervency in fulfilling our engagements to him, we should have been now further from hope than we are from perfection.

'Dear Lord, the ardour of thy love
Reproves my cold returns.'

Two things are causes of daily astonishment to me—the readiness of Christ to come from heaven to earth for me ; and my backwardness to rise from earth to heaven with him. But, oh how animating the prospect ! A time approaches when we shall rise to sink no more—'to be for ever with the Lord.' To be with

the Lord for a week, for a day, for an hour; how sweetly must the moments pass! But to be for ever with the Lord—that stamps salvation with perfection; that gives an energy to our hopes, and a dignity to our joy, so as to render it 'unspeakable and full of glory.' I have had a few realizing moments since we parted, and the effect has been, I trust, a broken heart. O my brother, it is desirable to have a broken heart, were it only for the sake of the pleasure it feels in being helped and healed by Jesus! Heart affecting views of the cursed effects of sin are highly salutary to a christian's growth in humility, confidence, and gratitude. At once how abasing and exalting is the comparison of our loathsome hearts with that of the lovely Saviour! In him we see all that can charm an angel's heart; in ourselves all that can gratify a devil's. And yet we may rest perfectly assured, that these nests of iniquity shall, ere long, be transformed into the temples of God; and these sighs of sorrow be exchanged for songs of praise.

"Last Lord's-day I spent the most profitable sabbath to myself that I ever remember since I have been in the ministry; and to this hour I feel the sweet solemnities of that day delightfully protracted. Ah, my brother, were it not for past experience, I should say,

'My heart presumes I cannot lose
The relish all my days.'

But now I rejoice with trembling; desiring to 'hold fast what I have, that no man take my crown.' Yet fearing that I shall find how,

'Ere one fleeting hour is past,
The flatt'ring world employs
Some sensual bait to seize my taste,
And to pollute my joys.'

In April, 1794, writing a few lines to the compiler of these Memoirs, on a Lord's-day evening, he thus concludes:—"We have had a good day. I find, as a dear friend once said, 'It is pleasant speaking for God

when we walk with him.' O for much of Enoch's spirit! The Head of the church grant it to my dear brother, and his affectionate friend, S. P."

In another letter to Mr. Summers, dated June 24, 1794, he thus writes:—"We, my friend, have entered on a correspondence of heart with heart, and must not lose sight of that avowed object. I thank you sincerely for continuing the remembrance of so unworthy a creature in your intercourse with Heaven; and I thank that sacred Spirit whose quickening influences you say you enjoy in the exercise. Yes, my brother, I have reaped the fruits of your supplications. I have been indulged with some seasons of unusual joy, tranquil as solitude, and solid as the Rock on which our hopes are built. In public exercises, peculiar assistance has been afforded; especially in these three things: the exaltation of the Redeemer's glory; the detection of the crooked ways, false refuges, and self-delusion of the human heart; and the stirring up of the saints to press onward, making God's cause their own, and considering themselves as living, not for themselves, but for Him alone.

Nor hath the word been without its effect: above fifty have been added to our church this year, most of whom I rejoice in as the seals of my ministry in the Lord. Indeed I am surrounded with goodness; and scarcely a day passes over my head but I say, Were it not for an ungrateful heart, I should be the happiest man alive; and that excepted, I neither expect nor wish to be happier in this world. My wife, my children, and myself, are uninterruptedly healthy; my friends kind; my soul at rest; and my labours successful. Who should be content and thankful if I should not? O my brother, help me to praise!"

In a letter to Mrs. Pearce, from Plymouth, dated Sept. 2, 1794, the dark side of the cloud seems towards him:—"I have felt much barrenness," says he, "as to

spiritual things since I have been here, compared with my usual frame at home; and it is a poor exchange, to enjoy the creature at the expense of the Creator's presence! A few seasons of spirituality I have enjoyed! but my heart, my inconstant heart, is too prone to rove from its proper centre. Pray for me, my dear, my dearest friend: I do for you daily. O wrestle for me, that I may have more of Enoch's spirit! I am fully persuaded that a christian is no longer really happy and inwardly satisfied, than while he walks with God; and I would this moment rejoice to abandon every pleasure here, for a closer walk with him. I cannot, amidst all the round of social pleasure, amidst the most inviting scenes of nature, feel that peace with God which passeth understanding. My thirst for preaching Christ, I fear, abates; and a detestable vanity for the reputation of a good preacher, as the world terms it, has already cost me many conflicts. Daily I feel convinced of the propriety of a remark which my friend Summers made on his journey to Wales — that it is easier for a christian to walk habitually near to God, than to be irregular in our walk with him. But I want resolution; I want a contempt of the world; I want more heavenly-mindedness; I want more humility; I want much, very much of that which God alone can bestow. Lord, help the weakest lamb in all thy flock!

I preached this evening from Cant. ii. 3.—'I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.' But how little love for my Saviour did I feel! With what little affection and zeal did I speak! I am praised by some; I am followed by many; I am respected by most of my acquaintance: but all this is nothing, yea, less than nothing, compared with possessing this testimony that I please God. O thou Friend of sinners! humble me by repentance, and melt me down with love.

To-morrow morning I set off for Launceston. I write to night, lest my stay in Cornwall might make

my delay appear tedious to the dear and deserving object of my most undissembled love. O my Sarah, had I as much proof that I love Jesus Christ, as I have of my love to you, I should prize it more than rubies. As often as you can find an hour for correspondence, think of your more than ever affectionate S. P"

On the same subject, and the same occasion, about three weeks afterwards (Sept. 23, 1794), he wrote to Mr. Summers. His dissatisfaction with himself while spending his time in visits, and his satisfaction when engaged in his proper work, are well worthy of attention. "I was pretty much engaged in preaching," says he, "and often felt enlarged in public work: but in private, my almost daily cry was, 'My leanness, my leanness!' Indeed it was a barren visit, as to the inward exercises of grace. Now and then I felt a brokenness of spirit, and a panting after God; but in general my mind was in a dissipated state. After so long an absence from so large an acquaintance, I was always crowded with company, some of whom, though amiable, were very gay. Their politeness and cheerfulness, joined with a high degree of indulgence, were too fascinating for my volatile mind. I admired, and was too much conformed to their spirit. I did indeed often struggle with myself, and watched for occasions of dropping some improving hint; but either through want of opportunity or of fortitude, the hint seldom produced a long conversation, or a permanent effect. New visits, or excursions, were every day proposed, and my heart was continually divided between painful recollections and flattering hopes. One lesson indeed I have thoroughly learned—that real, solid satisfaction is to be found in nothing but God. May I have grace to improve it throughout my future life.

The last week I have known more of the power of inward religion, than all the four which I have spent from home. I devoted the week to my Lord's service

entirely, and I found in keeping his commandments great reward."

In another to Mr. Summers, dated Nov. 10, 1794, he says: I suppose I shall visit London in the spring: prepare my way by communion with God and man. I hope your soul prospers. I have enjoyed more of God within this month than ever since the day of my espousals with him. O my brother, help me to praise! I cannot say that I am quite so exalted in my frame to-day; yet still I acknowledge what I have lived upon for weeks—that were there no being or thing in the universe besides God and me, I should be at no loss for happiness. O

> 'Tis heaven to rest in his embrace,
> And no where else but there.'

CHAPTER II.—*His laborious exertions in promoting Missions to the Heathen, and offering himself to become a Missionary.*

Mr. Pearce was uniformly the spiritual and active servant of Christ; but neither his spirituality nor his activity would have appeared in the manner they have, but for his engagements in the introduction of the gospel among the heathen.

It was not long after his settlement at Birmingham, that he became acquainted with Mr. Carey, in whom he found a soul nearly akin to his own. When the brethren in the counties of Northampton and Leicester formed themselves into a Missionary Society at Kettering, in October, 1792, he was there, and entered into the business with all his heart. On his return to Birmingham, he communicated the subject to his congregation with so much effect, that to the small sum of 13*l*. 2*s*. 6*d*. with which the subscription was begun, 70*l*. were collected, and transmitted to the treasurer; and the leading members of the church formed them-

selves into an Auxiliary Society. Early in the following spring, when it was resolved that our brethren Thomas and Carey should go on a mission to the Hindoos, and a considerable sum of money was wanted for the purpose, he laboured with increasing ardour in various parts of the kingdom; and when the object was accomplished, he rejoiced in all his labour, and blessed God.

During his labours and journies for this important object, he wrote several letters to his friends; an extract or two from which will discover the state of his mind at this period, as well as the encouragements that he met with in his work at home.

TO MR. STEADMAN.

"Birmingham, Feb. 8, 1793.

"Union of sentiment often creates friendship among carnal men, and similarity of feeling never fails to produce affection among pious men, as far as that similarity is known. I have loved you ever since I knew you. We saw, we felt alike, in the interesting concerns of personal religion. We formed a reciprocal attachment. We expressed it by words. We agreed to do so by correspondence; and we have not altogether been wanting to our engagements. But our correspondence has been interrupted, not, I believe, through any diminution of regard on either side; I am persuaded not on mine. I rather condemn myself as the first aggressor; but I excuse while I condemn, and so would you did you know half the concerns which devolve upon me in my present situation. Birmingham is a central place; the inhabitants are numerous; our members are between three and four hundred. The word preached has lately been remarkably blessed. In less than five months I baptized nearly forty persons, almost all newly awakened. Next Lord's-day week I expect to add to their

number. These persons came to my house, to propose the most important of all inquiries—'What must we do to be saved?' I have been thus engaged some weeks, during the greatest part of most days. This, with four sermons a week, will account for my neglect. But your letter, received this evening, calls forth every latent affection of my heart for you. We are, my dear brother, not only united in the common object of pursuit—salvation; and not only rest our hopes on the same foundation—Jesus Christ; but we feel alike respecting the poor heathens. Oh how christianity expands the mind! What tenderness for our poor fellow-sinners! What sympathy for their moral misery! What desires to do them everlasting good doth it provoke! How satisfying to our judgments is this evidence of grace! How gratifying to our present taste are these benevolent breathings! Oh how I love that man, whose soul is deeply affected with the importance of the precious gospel to idolatrous heathens. Excellently, my dear brother, you observe, that great as its blessings are in the estimation of a sinner called in a christian country, inexpressibly greater must they shine on the newly-illuminated mind of a converted pagan."

TO MR. FULLER.

"February 23, 1793.

"I am willing to go any where, and do any thing in my power; but I hope no plan will be suffered to interfere with the affecting, hoped-for, dreaded day, March 13, (the day of our brethren, Carey and Thomas's solemn designation at Leicester) Oh how the anticipation of it at once rejoices and afflicts me! Our hearts need steeling to part with our much-loved brethren, who are about to venture their all for the name of the Lord Jesus. I feel my soul melting within me when I read the 20th chapter of Acts, and

especially verses 36—38. But why grieve? We shall see them again. O yes; them and the children whom the Lord will give them; we and the children whom the Lord hath given us. We shall meet again, not to weep and pray, but to smile and praise."

From the day of the departure of the missionaries, no one was more importunate in prayer than Mr. Pearce; and, on the news of their safe arrival, no one was more filled with joy and thankfulness.

Hitherto we had witnessed his zeal in promoting this important undertaking at home: but this did not satisfy him. In October, 1794, we were given to understand, that he had for some time had it in serious contemplation to go himself, and to cast in his lot with his brethren in India. When his designs were first discovered, his friends and connexions were much concerned, and endeavoured to persuade him that he was already in a sphere of usefulness too important to be relinquished. But his answer was, that they were too interested in the affair to be competent judges. And nothing would satisfy him short of his making a formal offer of his services to the committee: nor could he be happy for them to decide upon it without their appointing a day of solemn prayer for the purpose, and, when assembled, hearing an account of the principal exercises of his mind upon the subject, with the reasons which induced him to make the proposal, as well as the reasons alleged by his connexions against it.

On October 4, 1794, he wrote to an intimate friend, of whom he entertained a hope that he might accompany him, as follows:—

"Last Wednesday I rode to Northampton, where a ministers' meeting was held on the following day. We talked much about the mission. We read some fresh and very encouraging accounts. We lamented that

we could not obtain any suitable persons to send out to the assistance of our brethren. Now what do you think was said at this meeting? My dear brother, do not be surprised that all present united in opinion, that in all our connexion there was no man known to us so suitable as you, provided you were disposed for it, and things could be brought to bear. I thought it right to mention this circumstance; and one thing more I cannot refrain from saying, that were it manifestly the will of God, I should call that the happiest hour of my life which witnessed our both embarking with our families on board one ship, as helpers of the servants of Jesus Christ already in Hindostan. Yes; I could unreluctantly leave Europe and all its contents, for the pleasures and perils of this glorious service. Often my heart in the sincerest ardours thus breathes forth its desires unto God—'Here am I, send me.' But I am ignorant whether you, from experience, can realize my feelings. Perhaps you have friendship enough for me to lay open your meditations on this subject in your next. If you have had half the exercises that I have, it will be a relief to your labouring mind: or if you think I have made too free with you, reprove me, and I will love you still. O if I could find a heart that had been tortured and ravished like my own in this respect, I should form a new kind of alliance, and feel a friendship of a novel species. With eagerness should I communicate all the vicissitudes of my sensations, and with eagerness listen to a recital of kindred feelings. With impatience I should seek, and with gratitude receive direction and support, and, I hope, feel a new occasion of thankfulness when I bow my knee to the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. Whence is it that I thus write to you, as I have never written to any one before? Is there a fellowship of the spirit; or is it the confidence that I have in your friendship that thus directs my pen? Tell me, dear ——! Tell me how you felt, and how

you still feel on this interesting subject, and do not long delay the gratification to your very affectionate friend and brother, "S. P."

About a month preceding the decision of this affair, he drew up a narrative of his experience respecting it; resolving at the same time to set apart one day in every week for secret fasting and prayer to God for direction; and to keep a diary of the exercises of his mind during the month.

When the committee were assembled at Northampton, according to his desire, he presented to them the narrative, which was as follows:—

"October 8, 1794.

"Having had some peculiar exercises of mind relative to my personally attempting to labour for the dear Redeemer amongst the heathen; and being at a loss to know what is the will of the Lord in this matter respecting me, I have thought that I might gain some satisfaction, by adopting these two resolutions:— First, that I will, as in the presence of God, faithfully endeavour to recollect the various workings of my mind on this subject, from the first period of my feeling any desire of this nature until now, and commit them to writing; together with what considerations do now, on the one hand, impel me to the work, and on the other, what prevent me from immediately resolving to enter upon it. Secondly, that I will from this day keep a regular journal, with special relation to this matter.

This account and journal will, I hope, furnish me with much assistance in forming a future opinion of the path of duty; as well as help any friends whom I may hereafter think proper to consult, to give me suitable advice in the business. Lord help me!

It is very common for young converts to feel strong desires for the conversion of others. These

desires immediately followed the evidences of my own religion; and I remember well they were particularly fixed upon the poor heathens. I believe the first week that I knew the grace of God in truth, I put up many fervent cries to Heaven in their behalf; and at the same time felt an earnest desire to be employed in promoting their salvation. It was not long after, that the first settlers sailed for Botany Bay. I longed to go with them, although in company with the convicts, in hopes of making known the blessings of the great salvation in New Zealand. I actually had thought of making an effort to go out unknown to my friends; but, ignorant how to proceed, I abandoned my purpose. Nevertheless, I could not help talking about it; and at one time a report was circulated that I was really going, and a neighbouring minister very seriously conversed with me on the subject.

While I was at the Bristol academy, the desire remained; but not with that energy as at first, except on one or two occasions. Being sent by my tutor to preach two sabbaths at Coleford, I felt particular sweetness in devoting the evenings of the week to going from house to house among the colliers, who dwell in the forest of Dean, adjoining the town, conversing and praying with them, and preaching to them. In these exercises I found the most solid satisfaction that I have ever known in discharging the duties of my calling. In a poor hut, with a stone to stand upon, and a three-legged stool for my desk, surrounded with thirty or forty of the smutty neighbours, I have felt such an unction from above, that my whole auditory have been melted into tears, whilst directed to 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;' and I weeping among them, could scarcely speak, or they hear, for interrupting sighs and sobs. Many a time did I then think, thus it was with the apostles of our Lord, when they went from house to house among the poor heathen. In work

like this I could live and die. Indeed, had I at that time been at liberty to settle, I should have preferred that situation to any in the kingdom with which I was then acquainted.

But the Lord placed me in a situation very different. He brought me to Birmingham; and here, amongst the novelties, cares, and duties of my station, I do not remember any wish for foreign service, till, after a residence of some months, I heard Dr. Coke preach at one of Mr. Wesley's chapels, from Psalm lxviii. 31. "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." Then it was, that, in Mr. Horne's phrase, 'I felt a passion for missions.' Then I felt an interest in the state of the heathen world far more deep and permanent than before, and seriously thought how I could best promote their obtaining the knowledge of the crucified Jesus.

As no way at that time was open, I cannot say that I thought of taking a part of the good work among the heathen abroad; but resolved that I would render them all the assistance I could at home. My mind was employed during the residue of that week in meditating on Psalm lxxxvii. 3. 'Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God;' and the next sabbath morning I spoke from those words, on the promised increase of the church of God. I had observed, that our monthly meetings for prayer had been better attended than the other prayer-meetings, from the time that I first knew the people in Cannon-street: but I thought a more general attention to them was desirable. I therefore preached on the sabbath-day evening preceding the next monthly prayer-meeting, from Matt. vi. 10. 'Thy kingdom come;' and urged with ardour and affection a universal union of the serious part of the congregation in this exercise. It rejoiced me to see three times as many the next night as usual; and for some time after that, I had nearly equal cause for joy.

As to my own part, I continued to preach much upon the promises of God respecting the conversion of the heathen nations; and by so doing, and always communicating to my people every piece of information I could obtain respecting the present state of missions, they soon imbibed the same spirit: and from that time to this they have discovered so much concern for the more extensive spread of the gospel, that at our monthly prayer-meetings, both stated and occasional, I should be as much surprised at the case of the heathen being omitted in any prayer, as at an omission of the name and merits of Jesus.

Indeed, it has been a frequent mean of enkindling my languid devotion, in my private, domestic, and public engagements in prayer. When I have been barren in petitioning for myself, and other things, often have I been sweetly enlarged when I came to notice the situation of those who were perishing for lack of knowledge.

Thus I went on praying, and preaching, and conversing on the subject, till the time of brother Carey's ordination at Leicester, May 24, 1791. On the evening of that day, he read to the ministers a great part of his manuscript, since published: entitled, 'An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen.' This added fresh fuel to my zeal. But to pray and preach on the subject was all I could then think of doing. But when I heard of a proposed meeting at Kettering, Oct. 2, 1792, for the express purpose of considering our duty in regard of the heathen, I could not resist my inclination for going; although at that time I was not much acquainted with the ministers of the Northamptonshire Association. There I got my judgment informed, and my heart increasingly interested. I returned home resolved to lay myself out in the cause. The public steps I have taken are too well known to need repeating: but my mind became now inclined to

go among the heathen myself. Yet a consideration of my connexions with the dear people of God in Birmingham restrained my desires, and kept me from naming my wishes to any body (as I remember), except to brother Carey. With him I was pretty free. We had an interesting conversation about it just before he left Europe. I shall never forget the manner of his saying, 'Well, you will come after us.' My heart said, Amen! and my eagerness for the work increased; though I never talked freely about it, except to my wife, and we then both thought, that my relation to the church in Cannon-street, and usefulness there, forbad any such attempt. However, I have made it a constant matter of prayer, often begging of God, as I did when first I was disposed for the work of the ministry, either that he would take away the desire, or open a door for its fulfilment. And the result has uniformly been, that the more spiritual I have been in the frame of my mind, the more love I have felt for God, and the more communion I have enjoyed with him, so much the more disposed have I been to engage as a missionary among the heathen.

Until the accounts came of our brethren's entrance on the work in India, my connexions in Europe pretty nearly balanced my desire for going abroad; and though I felt quite devoted to the Lord's will and work, yet I thought the scale rather preponderated on the side of my abiding in my present situation.

But since our brethren's letters have informed us, that there are such prospects of usefulness in Hindostan, and that preachers are a thousand times more wanted than people to preach to, my heart has been more deeply affected than ever with their condition; and my desires for a participation of the toils and pleasures, crosses and comforts, of which they are the

subjects, are advanced to an anxiety which nothing can remove, and time seems to increase.

"It has pleased God also lately to teach me more than ever, that he himself is the fountain of happiness; that likeness to him, friendship for him, and communion with him, form the basis of all true enjoyment; and that this can be attained as well in an Eastern jungle, amongst Hindoos and Moors, as in the most polished part of Europe. The very disposition, which, blessed be my dear Redeemer! he has given me, to be any thing, do any thing, or endure any thing, so that his name might be glorified—I say, the disposition itself is heaven begun below! I do feel a daily panting after more devotedness to his service, and I can never think of my suffering Lord without dissolving into love; love which constrains me to glorify him with my body and spirit, which are his.

I do often represent to myself all the possible hardships of a mission, arising from my own heart, the nature of the country, domestic connexions, disappointment in my hopes, &c. And then I set over against them all, these two thoughts—I am God's servant, and God is my friend. In this I anticipate happiness in the midst of suffering, light in darkness, and life in death. Yea, I do not count my life dear unto myself, so that I may win some poor heathens unto Christ: and I am willing to be offered as a sacrifice on the service of the faith of the gospel.

Mr. Horne justly observes, 'That in order to justify a man's undertaking the work of a missionary, he should be qualified for it, disposed heartily to enter upon it, and free from such ties as to exclude an engagement. As to the first, others must judge for me; but they must not be men who have an interest in keeping me at home. I shall rejoice in opportunities of attaining to an acquaintance with the ideas of judicious and impartial men in this matter, and with

them I must leave it. A willingness to embark in this cause I do possess; and I can hardly persuade myself, that God has for ten years inclined my heart to this work, without having any thing for me to do in it. But the third thing requires more consideration, and here alone I hesitate."

Here he goes on to state all the objections from this quarter, with his answers to them; leaving it with his brethren to decide, when they had heard the whole.

The committee, after the most serious and mature deliberation, though they were fully satisfied as to brother Pearce's qualifications, and greatly approved of his spirit, yet were unanimously of opinion that he ought not to go; and that, not merely on account of his connexions at home, which might have been pleaded in the case of brother Carey, but on account of the mission itself, which required his assistance in the station which he already occupied.

In this opinion, brother Carey himself, with singular disinterestedness of mind, afterwards concurred; and wrote to brother Pearce to the same effect. (See Periodical Accounts, Vol. I. p. 374.)

On receiving the opinion of the committee, he immediately wrote to Mrs. P. as follows:—

"Northampton, Nov. 13, 1794.

"I am disappointed, but not dismayed. I ever wish to make my Saviour's will my own. I am more satisfied than ever I expected I should be with a negative upon my earnest desires, because the business has been so conducted, that, I think (if by any means such an issue could be ensured) the mind of Christ has been obtained. My dear brethren here have treated the affair with as much seriousness and affection as I could possibly desire, and, I think, more

than so insignificant a worm could expect. After we had spent the former part of this day in fasting and prayer, with conversation on the subject, till near two o'clock, brother Potts, King, and I retired. We prayed while the committee consulted. The case seemed difficult, and I suppose they were nearly two hours in deciding it. At last, time forced them to a point; and their answer I enclose for your satisfaction. Pray take care of it; it will serve for me to refer to when my mind may labour beneath a burden of guilt another day."

The decision of the committee, though it rendered him much more reconciled to abide in his native country, than he could have been without it, yet did not in the least abate his zeal for the object. As he could not promote it abroad, he seemed resolved to lay himself out more for it at home. In March, 1795, after a dangerous illness, he says in a letter to Mr. Fuller,—"Through mercy I am almost in a state of convalescence. May my spared life be wholly devoted to the service of my dear Redeemer! I do not care where I am, whether in England or in India, so that I am employed as he would have me: but surely we need pray hard, that God would send some more help to Hindostan."

In August, the same year, having received a letter from India, he wrote to Mr. Fuller as follows:—"Brother Carey speaks in such a manner of the effects of the gospel in his neighbourhood as in my view promises a fair illustration of our Lord's parable, when he compared the kingdom of heaven to a little leaven, hid in three measures of meal, which insinuated itself so effectually as to leaven the lump at last. Blessed be God, the leaven is already in the meal. The fermentation is begun; and my hopes were never half so strong as they are now, that the

whole shall be effectually leavened. O that I were there to witness the delightful process! But whither am I running?....I long to write you from Hindostan!"

It has been already observed, that, for a month preceding the decision of the committee, he resolved to devote one day in every week to secret prayer and fasting, and to keep a diary of the exercises of his mind during the whole of that period. This diary, which extends from Oct. 8, to Nov. 7, 1794, was not shown to the committee at the time: but merely the preceding narrative. Since his death a few of them have perused it; and have been almost ready to think, that if they had seen it before, they should not have dared to oppose his going. But the Lord hath taken him to himself! It no longer remains a question now, whether he shall labour in England or in India. A few passages, however, from this transcript of his heart, while contemplating a great and disinterested undertaking, will furnish a better idea of his character than could be given by any other hand; and with these we shall close the present chapter.

"Oct. 8, 1794.—Had some remarkable freedom and affection this morning, both in family and secret prayer. With many tears I dedicated myself, body and soul, to the service of Jesus; and earnestly implored full satisfaction respecting the path of duty. I feel a growing deadness for all earthly comforts; and derive my happiness immediately from God himself. May I still endure, as Moses did, by seeing Him who is invisible."

"Oct. 10.—Enjoyed much freedom to-day in the family. While noticing in prayer the state of the millions of heathens who know not God, I felt the aggregate value of their immortal souls with peculiar energy.

"Afterwards was much struck, whilst on my knees before God in secret, I read the fourth chapter of

Micah. The ninth verse I fancied was very applicable to the church in Cannon-street: but what reason is there for such a cry about so insignificant a worm as I am? The third chapter of Habakkuk too, well expresses that mixture of solemnity and confidence with which I contemplate the work of the mission.

"Whilst at the prayer-meeting to-night, I learned more of the meaning of some passages of scripture than ever before. Suitable frames of soul are like good lights, in which a painting appears to its full advantage. I had often meditated on Phil. iii. 7, 8, and Gal. vi. 14; but never felt crucifixion to the world, and disesteem for all that it contains, as at that time. All prospects of pecuniary independence, and growing reputation, with which in unworthier moments I had amused myself, were now chased from my mind; and the desire of living wholly to Christ swallowed up every other thought. Frowns and smiles, fulness and want, honour and reproach, were now equally indifferent; and when I concluded the meeting, my whole soul felt, as it were, going after the lost sheep of Christ among the heathen.

"I do feel a growing satisfaction in the proposal of spending my whole life in something nobler than the locality of this island will admit. I long to raise my Master's banner in climes where the sound of his fame has but scarcely reached. He hath said, for my encouragement, that all nations shall flow unto it.

"The conduct and success of Stach, Boenish, and other Moravian missionaries in Greenland, both confound and stimulate me. O Lord, forgive my past indolence in thy service, and help me to redeem the residue of my days, for exertions more worthy a friend of mankind, and a servant of God."

"Oct. 13.—Being taken up with visitors the former part of the day, I spent the after part in application to the Bengal language, and found the difficulties I apprehended vanish as fast as I encountered them. I

read and prayed, prayed and read, and made no small advances. Blessed be God!"

"Oct. 15.—There are in Birmingham 50,000 inhabitants; and, exclusive of the vicinity, ten ministers who preach the fundamental truths of the gospel. In Hindostan there are twice as many millions of inhabitants, and not so many gospel preachers. Now Jesus Christ hath commanded his ministers to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Why should we be so disproportionate in our labours? Peculiar circumstances must not be urged against positive commands: I am therefore bound, if others do not go, to make the means more proportionate to the multitude.

"To-night, reading some letters from brother Carey, in which he speaks of his wife's illness when she first came into the country, I endeavoured to realize myself not only with a sick, but a dead wife. The thought was like a cold dagger to my heart at first: but on recollection, I considered the same God ruled in India as in Europe; and that he could either preserve her, or support me, as well there as here. My business is only to be where he would have me. Other things I leave to him. O Lord, though with timidity, yet I hope not without satisfaction, I look every possible evil in the face, and say, Thy will be done!"

"Oct. 17.—This is the first day I have set apart for extraordinary devotion, in relation to my present exercise of mind. Rose earlier than usual, and began the day in prayer that God would be with me in every part of it, and grant that the end I have in view may be clearly ascertained—the knowledge of his will.

"Considering the importance of the work before me, I began at the foundation of all religion, and reviewed the grounds on which I stood—the being of a God; the relation of mankind to him; with the divine inspiration of the scriptures: and the review afforded

me great satisfaction.* I also compared the different religions which claimed divine origin, and found little difficulty in determining which had most internal evidence of its divinity. I attentively read and seriously considered Dr. Doddridge's three excellent Sermons on the Evidences of the Christian Religion; which was followed by such conviction, that I had hardly patience to conclude the book before I fell on my knees before God, to bless him for such a religion, established on such a basis; and I have received more solid satisfaction this day upon the subject than ever I did before.

"I also considered, since the gospel is true, since Christ is Head of the church, and his will is the law of all his followers, what are the obligations of his servants, in respect of the enlargement of his kingdom. I here referred to our Lord's commission, which I could not but consider as universal in its object, and permanent in its obligations. I read brother Carey's remarks upon it: and as the command has never been repealed; as there are millions of beings in the world on whom the command may be exercised; as I can produce no counter-revelation; and as I lie under no natural impossibilities of performing it; I concluded that I, as a servant of Christ, was bound by this law.

"I took the narrative of my experience, and statement of my views on this subject, in my hand, and, bowing down before God, I earnestly besought an impartial and enlightened spirit. I then perused that

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* There is a wide difference between admitting these principles in theory, and making use of them. David might have worn Saul's accoutrements at a parade; but in meeting Goliath, he must go forth in an armour that had been tried. A mariner may sit in his cabin at his ease, while the ship is in harbour; but ere he undertakes a voyage, he must examine its soundness, and whether it will endure the storms which may overtake him.

paper; and can now say, that I have (allowing for my own fallibility) not one doubt upon the subject. I therefore resolved to close this solemn season with reading a portion of both Testaments, and earnest prayer to God for my family, my people, the heathen world, the Society, and particularly for the success of our dear brethren Thomas and Carey, and his blessing, presence, and grace, to be ever my guide and glory. Accordingly, I read the forty-ninth chapter of Isaiah; and with what sweetness! I never read a chapter in private with such feelings since I have been in the ministry. The 8th, 9th, 10th, 20th, and 21st verses, I thought remarkably suitable.

"Read also part of the epistle to the Ephesians, and the first chapter to the Philippians. O that for me to live may be Christ alone! Blessed be my dear Saviour, in prayer I have had such fellowship with him, as would warm me in Greenland, comfort me in New Zealand, and rejoice me in the valley of the shadow of death.

"Oct. 18.—I dreamed that I saw one of the christian Hindoos. Oh how I loved him! I long to realize my dream. How pleasant will it be to sit down at the Lord's table with our swarthy brethren, and hear Jesus preached in their language! Surely then will come to pass the saying that is written, In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, all are one in him.

"Oct. 20.—Was a little discouraged on reading Mr. Zeigenbald's conferences with the Malabarians, till I recollected, what ought to be ever present to my mind, in brother Carey's words, 'The work is God's.'

"In the evening I found some difficulty with the language; but considering how merchants and captains overcome this difficulty for the sake of wealth, I sat confounded before the Lord, that I should ever have indulged such a thought; and, looking up to him, I set about it with cheerfulness, and found that I was

making a sensible advance, although I can never apply till eleven o'clock at night, on account of my other duties.*

"Preached from 2 Kings iv. 26. 'It is well.' Was much enlarged both in thought and expression. While speaking of the satisfaction enjoyed by a truly pious mind, when it feels itself in all circumstances and times in the hand of a good God, I felt, that were the universe destroyed, and I the only being in it, besides God, he is fully adequate to my complete happiness; and had I been in an African wood, surrounded with venomous serpents, devouring beasts, and savage men, in such a frame, I should be the subject of perfect peace and exalted joy. Yes, O my God, thou hast taught me, that thou alone art worthy of my confidence: and with this sentiment fixed on my heart, I am free from all solicitude about any temporal prospects or concerns. If thy presence be enjoyed, poverty shall be riches; darkness, light; affliction, prosperity; reproach, my honour; and fatigue, my rest: and thou hast said, My presence shall go with thee. Enough, Lord: I ask for nothing, nothing more.

"But how sad the proofs of our depravity; and how insecure the best frames we enjoy! Returning home, a wicked expression from a person who passed me caught my ear, and recurred so often to my thoughts for some minutes, as to bring guilt upon my mind, and

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* Night studies, often continued till two or three o'clock in the morning, it is to be feared, were the first occasion of impairing Mr. Pearce's health, and brought on that train of nervous sensations with which he was afterwards afflicted. Though not much accustomed to converse on the subject, he once acknowledged to a brother in the ministry, that, owing to his enervated state, he sometimes dreaded the approach of public service to such a degree, that he would rather have submitted to stripes than engage in them; and that, while in the pulpit, he was frequently distressed with the apprehension of falling over it. Night studies NEVER should be indulged in.

overwhelm me with shame before God. But I appealed to God for my hatred of all such things, secretly confessed the sin of my heart, and again ventured to the mercy-seat. On such occasions how precious a Mediator is to the soul!"

"Oct. 22.—I did not on the former part of the day feel my wonted ardour for the work of a missionary; but rather an inclination to consult flesh and blood, and look at the worst side of things. I did so; but when on my knees before God in prayer about it, I first considered, that my judgment was still equally satisfied, and my conscience so convinced, that I durst not relinquish the work for a thousand worlds! And then I thought, that this dull frame had not been without its use, as I was now fully convinced, that my desire to go did not arise from any fluctuation of inconstant passions, but the settled convictions of my judgment. I therefore renewed my vows unto the Lord, that, let what difficulties soever be in the way, I would (provided the Society approved) surmount them all. I felt a kind of unutterable satisfaction of mind, in my resolution of leaving the decision in the hands of my brethren. May God rightly dispose their hearts! I have no doubt but he will."

"Oct. 23.—Have found a little time to apply to the Bengalee language. How pleasant is it to work for God! Love transforms thorns to roses, and makes pain itself a pleasure. I never sat down to any study with such peculiar and continued satisfaction. The thought of exalting the Redeemer in this language is a spur to my application paramount to every discouragement for want of a living tutor. I have passed this day with an abiding satisfaction respecting my present views."

"Oct. 24.—O for the enlightening, enlivening, and sanctifying presence of God to day! It is the second of those days of extraordinary devotion, which I have set apart for seeking God in relation to the mission.

How shall I spend it? I will devote the morning to prayer, reading and meditation; and the afternoon to visiting the wretched, and relieving the needy. May God accept my services, guide me by his counsel, and employ me for his praise!

"Having besought the Lord that he would not suffer me to deceive myself in so important a matter, as that which I had now retired to consider, and exercised some confidence that he would be the rewarder of those who diligently seek him, I read the 119th Psalm at the conclusion of my prayer, and felt and wondered at the congruity of so many of the verses to the breathings of my own heart. Often with holy admiration I paused, and read, and thought, and prayed over the verse again; especially verses 20, 31, 59, 60, 112, 145, 146. 'My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. I have stuck to thy testimonies. O Lord, put me not to shame.'

"Most of the morning I spent in seriously reading Mr. Horne's Letters on Missions, having first begged of the Lord to make the perusal profitable to my instruction in the path of duty. To the interrogation, 'Which of you will forsake all, deny himself, take up his cross, and, if God pleases, die for his religion?' I replied spontaneously, Blessed be God, I am willing! Lord, help me to accomplish it!

"Closed this season with reading the 61st and 62d chapters of Isaiah, and prayer for the church of God at large, my own congregation, the heathen, the society, brethren Thomas and Carey, all missionaries whom God has sent, of every denomination, my own case, my wife and family, and for assistance in my work.

"The after part of this day has been gloomy indeed. All the painful circumstances which can attend my going have met upon my heart, and formed a load almost insupportable. A number of things, which have been some time accumulating, have united their pres-

sure, and made me groan, being burdened. Whilst at a prayer-meeting I looked round on my christian friends, and said to myself, A few months more, and probably I shall leave you all! But in the deepest of my gloom I resolved, though faint, yet to pursue; not doubting but my Lord would give me strength equal to the day.

"I had scarcely formed this resolution before it occurred, My Lord and Master was a man of sorrows. Oppressed and covered with blood, he cried, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' Yet in the depth of his agonies he added, 'Thy will be done.' This thought was to me what the sight of the cross was to Bunyan's pilgrim; I lost my burden. Spent the remainder of the meeting in sweet communion with God.

"But on coming home, the sight of Mrs. P. replaced my load. She had for some time been much discouraged at the thoughts of going. I therefore felt reluctant to say any thing on this subject, thinking it would be unpleasant to her; but though I strove to conceal it, an involuntary sigh betrayed my uneasiness. She kindly enquired the cause. I avoided at first an explanation, till she, guessing the reason, said to this effect: I hope you will be no more uneasy on my account. For the last two or three days I have been more comfortable than ever in the thought of going. I have considered the steps you are pursuing to know the mind of God, and I think you cannot take more proper ones. When you consult the ministers, you should represent your obstacles as strongly as your inducements; and then, if they advise your going, though the parting from my friends will be almost insupportable, yet I will make myself as happy as I can, and God can make me happy anywhere.

"Should this little diary fall into the hands of a man having the soul of a missionary, circumstanced as I am, he will be the only man capable of sharing my

peace, my joy, my gratitude, my rapture of soul. Thus at evening-tide it is light; thus God brings his people through fire and through water into a wealthy place: thus those who ask do receive, and their joy is full. O love the Lord, ye his saints: there is no want to them that fear him!"

"Oct. 26.—Had much enlargement this morning, whilst speaking on the nature, extent, and influence of divine love: what designs it formed; with what energy it acted; with what perseverance it pursued its object; what obstacles it surmounted; what difficulties it conquered; and what sweetness it imparted under the heaviest loads and severest trials. Almost through the day I enjoyed a very desirable frame; and, on coming home, my wife and I had some conversation on the subject of my going. She said, though in general the thought was painful, yet there were some seasons when she had no preference, but felt herself disposed to go or stay, as the Lord should direct.

"This day wrote to brother Fuller, briefly stating my desires, requesting his advice, and proposing a meeting of the committee on the business. I feel great satisfaction arising from leaving the matter to the determination of my honoured brethren, and to God through them."

"Oct. 31.—I am encouraged to enter upon this day (which I set apart for supplicating God) by a recollection of his promises to those who seek him. If the sacred word be true, the servants of God can never seek his face in vain: and as I am conscious of my sincerity and earnest desire only to know his pleasure that I may perform it, I find a degree of confidence that I shall realize the fulfilment of the word on which he causeth me to hope.

"Began the day with solemn prayer for the assistance of the Holy Spirit in my present exercise, that so I might enjoy the spirit and power of prayer, and

have my personal religion improved, as well as my public steps directed. In this duty I found a little quickening.

"I then read over the narrative of my experience and my journal. I find my views are still the same; but my heart is much more established than when I began to write.

"Was much struck in reading Paul's words in 2 Cor. i. 17; when, after speaking of his purpose to travel for the preaching of the gospel, he saith, 'Did I then use lightness when I was thus minded? Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?' The piety of the apostle in not purposing after the flesh, the seriousness of spirit with which he formed his designs, and his steadfast adherence to them, were in my view worthy of the highest admiration and strictest imitation.

"Thinking that I might get some assistance from David Brainerd's experience, I read his life up to the time of his being appointed a missionary among the Indians. The exalted devotion of that dear man almost made me question mine. Yet at some seasons he speaks of sinking as well as rising. His singular piety excepted, his feelings, prayers, desires, comforts, hopes, and sorrows are my own: and if I could follow him in nothing else, I knew I had been enabled to say this with him—I felt exceedingly calm, and quite resigned to God respecting my future improvement, (or station) when and where he pleased. My faith lifted me above the world, and removed all those mountains which I could not look over of late. I thought I wanted not the favour of man to lean upon: for I knew God's favour was infinitely better, and that it was no matter where, or when, or how, Christ should send me, nor with what trials he should still exercise me, if I might be prepared for his work and will.

"Read the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth

chapters of the second epistle to the Corinthians. Felt a kind of placidity, but not much joy. On beginning the concluding prayer I had no strength to wrestle, nor power with God at all. I seemed as one desolate and forsaken. I prayed for myself, the society, the missionaries, the converted Hindoos, the church in Cannon Street, my family, and ministry; but all was dulness, and I feared I had offended the Lord. I felt but little zeal for the mission, and was about to conclude with a lamentation over the hardness of my heart.....when on a sudden it pleased God to smite the rock with the rod of his Spirit, and immediately the waters began to flow! O what a heavenly, glorious, melting power was it! My eyes, almost closed with weeping, hardly suffer me to write. I feel it over again. Oh what a view of the love of a crucified Redeemer did I enjoy! The attractions of his cross, how powerful! I was as a giant refreshed with new wine, as to my animation; like Mary at the Master's feet, weeping, for tenderness of soul; like a little child, for submission to my heavenly Father's will; and like Paul, for a victory over all self-love, creature-love, and fear of man, when these things stand in the way of my duty. The interest that Christ took in the redemption of the heathen, the situation of our brethren in Bengal, the worth of the soul, and the plain command of Jesus Christ, together with an irresistible drawing of soul, which far exceeded any thing I ever felt before, and is impossible to be described or conceived of by those who have never experienced it—all compelled me to vow that I would, by his leave, serve him among the heathen. The Bible lying open before me (upon my knees) many passages caught my eye, and confirmed the purposes of my heart. If ever in my life I knew any thing of the influences of the Holy Spirit, I did at this time. I was swallowed up in God. Hunger, fulness, cold, heat, friends, and enemies, all seemed nothing before God. I was in a new world. All was

delightful; for Christ was all and in all. Many times I concluded prayer; but, when rising from my knees, communion with God was so desirable, that I was sweetly drawn to it again and again, till my animal strength was almost exhausted. Then I thought it would be pleasure to burn for God!

"And now while I write, such a heavenly sweetness fills my soul that no exterior circumstance can remove it; and I do uniformly feel, that the more I am thus, the more I pant for the service of my blessed Jesus among the heathen. Yes, my dear, my dying Lord, I am thine, thy servant; and if I neglect the service of so good a master, I may well expect a guilty conscience in life, and a death awful as that of Judas or Spira!

"Nov. 3.—This evening received a letter from brother Ryland, containing many objections: but contradiction itself is pleasant when it is the voice of judgment mingled with affection. I wish to remember that I may be mistaken, though I cannot say I am at present convinced that it is so. I am happy to find that brother Ryland approves of my referring it to the committee. I have much confidence in the judgment of my brethren, and hope I shall be perfectly satisfied with their advice. I do think, however, that if they knew how earnestly I pant for the work, it would be impossible for them to withhold their ready acquiescence. O Lord, thou knowest my sincerity; and that if I go not to the work, it will not be owing to any reluctance on my part! If I stay in England, I fear I shall be a poor useless drone; or if a sense of duty prompt me to activity, I doubt whether I shall ever know inward peace and joy again. O Lord, I am, thou knowest, I am oppressed; undertake for me!"

Nov. 7.—This is the last day of peculiar devotion before the deciding meeting. May I have strength to wrestle with God to-day, for his wisdom to preside in the committee, and by faith to leave the issue to their determination.

"I did not enjoy much enlargement in prayer to-day. My mind seems at present incapable of those sensations of joy with which I have lately been much indulged, through its strugglings in relation to my going or staying: yet I have been enabled to commit the issue into the hands of God, as he may direct my brethren, hoping that their advice will be agreeable to his will."

The result of the committee-meeting has already been related; together with the state of his mind, as far as can be collected from his letters for some time after it. The termination of these tender and interesting exercises, and of all his other labours, in so speedy a removal from the present scene of action, may teach us not to draw any certain conclusion as to the designs of God concerning our future labours, from the ardour or sincerity of our feelings. He may take it well that it was in our hearts to build him a house, though he should for wise reasons have determined not to gratify us. Let it suffice, that in matters of everlasting moment, he has engaged to perfect that which concerns us. In this he hath condescended to bind himself as by an oath, for our consolation. Here therefore we may safely consider our spiritual desires as indicative of his designs: but it is otherwise, in various instances, with regard to present duty.

CHAPTER III.—*His Exercises and Labours, from the Time of his giving up the idea of going Abroad, to the Commencement of his last Affliction.*

Had the multiplied labours of this excellent man permitted his keeping a regular diary, we may see, by the foregoing specimen of a single month, what a rich store of truly christian experience would have pervaded these memoirs We should then have been better

able to trace the gradual openings of his holy mind, and the springs of that extraordinary unction of spirit, and energy of action, by which his life was distinguished. As it is, we can only collect the gleanings of the harvest, partly from memory, and partly from letters communicated by his friends.

This chapter will include a period of about four years, during which he went twice to London, to collect for the Baptist Mission, and once he visited Dublin, at the invitation of the Evangelical Society in that city.

There appears throughout the general tenour of his life a singular submissiveness to the will of God; and, what is worthy of notice, this disposition was generally most conspicuous when his own will was most counteracted. The justness of this remark is sufficiently apparent from his letter to Mrs. Pearce, of Nov. 13, 1794, after the decision of the committee; and the same spirit was carried into the common concerns of life. Thus, about a month afterwards, when his daughter Louisa was ill of a fever, he thus writes from Northampton to Mrs. Pearce:

Northampton, Dec. 13, 1794.

"I am just brought, on the wings of celestial mercy, safe to my Sabbath's station. I am well; and my dear friends here seem healthy and happy: but I feel for you. I long to know how our dear Louisa's pulse beats: I fear still feverish. We must not, however, suffer ourselves to be infected with a mental fever on this account. Is she ill? It is right. Is she very ill.... dying? It is still right. Is she gone to join the heavenly choristers? It is all right, notwithstanding our repinings. ....Repinings! No; we will not repine. It is best she should go. It is best for her: this we must allow. It is best for us. Do we expect it? Oh, what poor, ungrateful, short-sighted worms are we! Let us submit, my Sarah, till we come to

heaven: if we do not then see that it is best, let us then complain. But why do I attempt to console? Perhaps an indulgent providence has ere now dissipated your fears: or, if that same kind providence has removed our babe, you have consolation enough in him who suffered more than we; and more than enough to quiet all our passions, in that astonishing consideration—'God so loved the world, that he spared not his own Son.' Did God cheerfully give the holy child Jesus for us; and shall we refuse our child to him? He gave his Son to suffer: he takes our children to enjoy. Yes; to enjoy himself."

In June, 1795, he attended the Association at Kettering, partly on account of some missionary business there to be transacted. That was a season of great joy to many, especially the last forenoon previous to parting. From thence he wrote to Mrs. Pearce as follows:—

"From a pew in the house of God at Kettering, with my cup of joy running over, I address you by the hands of brother Simmons. Had it pleased Divine Providence to have permitted your accompanying me, my pleasures would have had no small addition; because I should have hoped that you would have been filled with similar consolation, and have received equal edification by the precious means of grace on which I have attended. Indeed, I never remember to have enjoyed a public meeting to such a high degree since I have been in the habit of attending upon them. O that I may return to you, and the church of God, in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ! I hope, my beloved, that you are not without the enjoyment of the sweetness and the supports of the blessed gospel. O that you may get and keep near to God, and in him find infinitely more than you can possibly lose by your husband's absence!"

In July, 1795, he received a pressing invitation from the General Evangelical Society in Dublin, to pay them a visit, and to assist in diffusing the gospel of the grace of God in that kingdom. This invitation he then declined, but afterwards, upon the invitation being repeated, he engaged to go over in the month of June, 1796.

A little before this journey, it occurred to Dr. Ryland, that an itinerating mission into Cornwall might be of use to the cause of true religion, and that two acceptable ministers might be induced to undertake it; and that, if executed during the vacation of the Bristol academy, two of the students might supply their place. He communicated his thoughts to Mr. Pearce, who wrote thus in answer:—

May 30, 1796.

"I thank you a thousand times for your last letter. Blessed be God, who hath put it into your heart to propose such a plan for increasing the boundaries of Zion! I have read your letter to our wisest friends here, and they heard it with great joy. The plan, the place, the mode, the persons—all, all meet our most affectionate wishes. How did such a scheme never enter our minds before? Alas, we have nothing in our hearts that is worth having, save what God puts there. Do write to me when at Dublin, and tell me whether it be resolved on; when they set out, &c. I hope, ere long, to hear, that as many disciples are employed in Great Britain, as the Saviour employed in Judea. When he gives the word, great will be the company of the preachers.

O my dear brother, let us go on still praying, contriving, labouring, defending, until 'the little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and the small stone from the mountain fill the whole earth.'

What pleasures do those lose who have no interest in God's gracious and holy cause! How thankful

should we be, that we are not strangers to the joy which the friends of Zion feel, when the Lord turneth again Zion's captivity."

On May 31, he set off for Dublin, and "the Lord prospered his way," so that he arrived at the time appointed; and from every account it appears, that he was not only sent in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace, but that the Lord himself went with him. His preaching was not only highly acceptable to every class of hearers, but the word came from him with power; and there is abundant reason to believe, that many will, through eternity, praise God for sending his message to them by this dear ambassador of Christ.

He was earnestly solicited by the Evangelical Society to renew his visit to that kingdom in 1798. Ready to embrace every call of duty, he had signified his compliance; and the time was fixed: but the breaking out of the rebellion prevented him from realizing his intention. This was a painful disappointment to many, who wished once more to see his face, and to have heard the glad tidings from his lips.

The following letter, concerning his visit to Dublin, was written to Mrs. Pearce, when he had been there little more than a week:—

Dublin, June 31, 1796.

"I long to know how you do, and you will be as much concerned to know how I go on at this distance from you. I haste to satisfy your inquiries.

I am in perfect health: am delightfully disappointed with the place and its inhabitants. I am very thankful that I came over. I have found much more religion here already, than I expected to meet with during my stay. The prospect of usefulness is flattering. I have already many more friends (I hope christian friends) than I can gratify by visits. Many doors

are open for preaching the gospel in the city; and my country excursions will probably be few. Thus much for outline.

But you will like to know how I spend my time, &c. Well then: I am at the house of a Mr. H——, late high-sheriff for the city: I am quite at home, I mean as to ease and familiarity; for as to style of living, I neither do, nor desire to equal it. Yet, in my present situation it is convenient. It would however, be sickening and dull, had I not a God to go to, to converse with, to enjoy, and to call my own. O it is this, it is this, my dearest Sarah, which gives a point to every enjoyment, and sweetens all the cup of life.

I thank God that I possess an abiding determination to aim at the consciences of the people in every discourse. I have borne the most positive testimony against the prevailing evils of professors here; as sensuality, gaiety, vain amusements, neglect of the sabbath, &c. and last night told an immense crowd of professors of the first rank, 'that if they made custom and fashion their plea, they were awfully deluding their souls; for it had always been the fashion to insult God, to dissipate time, and to pursue the broad road to hell; but it would not lessen their torments there, that the way to damnation was the fashion.'

I feared my faithfulness would have given them offence; but, I am persuaded, it was the way to please the Lord; and those, who I expected would be enemies, are not only at peace with me, but even renounce their sensual indulgences to attend on my ministry. I do assuredly believe that God hath sent me hither for good. The five-o'clock meetings are miserably attended in general. In a house that will hold fifteen hundred or two thousand people, you will hardly see above fifty! Yesterday morning I preached on the subject of public worship, from Psalm v. 7, and seriously warned them against preferring their bellies to God, and their own houses to his. I was delighted and

surprised, at the five-o'clock meeting, to see the place nearly full. Surely this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in my eyes. Never, never did I more feel how weak I am in myself—a mere nothing; and how strong I am in the omnipotence of God. I feel a superiority to all fear, and possess a conscious dignity in being the ambassador of Christ. O help me to praise! for it is He alone who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight: and still pray for me; for if he withdraw for a moment, I become as weak and unprofitable as the briers of the wilderness.

You cannot think how much I am supported by the assurance that I have left a praying people at Birmingham; and I believe that in answer to their prayers I have hitherto been wonderfully assisted in the public work, as well as enjoyed much in private devotion.

I have formed a most pleasing acquaintance with several serious young men in the University here, and with two of the Fellows of the College; most pious gentlemen indeed, who have undergone a world of reproach for Christ and his gospel."

The following particulars, in addition to the above, are taken partly from some notes in his own handwriting, and partly from the account given by his friend Mr. Summers, who accompanied him during the latter part of his visits.

At his first arrival, the congregations were but thinly attended, and the Baptist congregation in particular, amongst whom he delivered several discourses. It much affected him to see the whole city given to sensuality and worldly conformity; and especially to find those of his own denomination amongst the lowest and least affected with their condition. But the longer he continued, the more the congregations increased, and every opportunity became increasingly interesting, both to him and them. His faithful remonstrances,

and earnest recommendations of prayer-meetings to his Baptist friends, though at first apparently ill received, were well taken in the end; and he had the happiness to see in them some hopeful appearances of return to God.

Of the last seven or eight days of Mr. Pearce's continuance at Dublin, he himself thus writes:—

"Monday, July 4. At three in the afternoon I went with my friend Mr. Summers, to Mr. K.'s. Spent a very agreeable day. Miss A. K. remarked two wonders in Dublin—a praying society composed of students at college, and another of lawyers. The family were called together; I read and expounded the twelfth chapter of Isaiah, and prayed. At seven we went to a prayer-meeting at Plunket Street: there was a very large attendance. Mr. R. and Mr. S. prayed; and I spoke from Rom. x. 12, 13. 'There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all who call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Many seemed affected. After I had closed the opportunity, I told them some of my own experience, and requested, that if any present wished for conversation, they would come to me either that evening, or on Thursday evening, in the vestry. Five persons came in. One had been long impressed with religion, but could never summons courage enough to open her heart before. Another, a Miss W., attributed her first impressions, under God, to my ministry; and told me, that her father had regularly attended of late, and that her mother was so much alarmed as to be almost in despair. Poor girl! she seemed truly in earnest about her own soul, and as much concerned for her parents. The next had possessed a serious concern for some time, and of late had been much revived. One young lady, a Miss H., stayed in the meeting-house,

exceedingly affected indeed. Mr. K. spoke to her. She said, she would speak to me on Thursday.

Tuesday, 5.—Went to Leislip. At seven preached to a large and affected auditory.

Wednesday, 6.—Mr. H. and myself went to Mrs. M'G. to inquire about the young lady who was so much affected at the meeting. Mrs. M'G. said, her mother and sister were pious; that she had been very giddy; but that last Lord's-day she was seriously awakened to a sense of sin; had expressed her delight in religion, and fled for refuge to the blood of Jesus. Her sister was introduced to me, a sweetly pious lady. I agreed to wait for an interview with the young lady at Mr. H.'s, in Eccles Street, to-morrow.

Thursday, 7.—Miss H., her sister, and Mrs. M'G. came to Eccles Street. A most delightful interview. Seldom have I seen such proficiency in so short a time. That day week, at Plunket Street, she received her first serious impressions; her concern deepened at Mass Lane, on Lord's-day morning; more so in the evening at Plunket Street; but most of all on Monday night. I exhorted them to begin a prayer and experience-meeting; and they agreed. Blessed be God! this strengthens my hands greatly. At seven o'clock, preached at Plunket Street, from Jer. l. 4, 5. 'Going and weeping, they shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward.' A full house; and an impressive season. Tarried after the public services were ended, to converse on religion. The most pleasing case was that of a young man of Mr. D.'s.

Saturday, 9.—Went with my friend Mr. S. to call on Miss H. Found her at her mother's. We first passed the door. She ran out after us: seemed happy; and agitated. Ran, and called her mother. Soon we saw the door of the parlour open, and a majestic lady appeared; who, as she entered the room, thus accosted me: 'Who art thou, O blessed of the Lord! Welcome

to the widow's house ! Accept the widow's thanks for coming after the child whom thou hast begotten in the gospel !' I was too much overcome to do more than take by the hand the aged saint. A solemn silence ensued for a minute or two; when the old lady, recovering, expressed the fulness of her satisfaction respecting the reality of the change effected in her daughter, and her gratitude for great refreshment of her own soul, by means of my poor labours. She said she had known the Lord during forty years, being called under the ministry of John Fisher, in the open air, when on a visit to an officer, who was her brother-in-law. She told us much of her experience, and promised to encourage the prayer-meeting, which I proposed to be held in her house every Lord's-day evening. They are to begin to-morrow, after preaching. It was a pleasant meeting; and we returned with pleasure to Eccles Street. After we rose up to come away, the old lady affectionately said, 'May the good-will of Him who dwelt in the bush attend you wherever you go, for ever and ever!' "

The young lady, some months after, wrote to Mrs. S., and said, amongst other things :—" I have great reason to be thankful for the many blessings the Lord has been pleased to bestow upon me, and in particular for his sending Mr. Pearce to this city; and that through his means I have been convinced of sin. I am happy to inform you, that, through grace, I am enabled to walk in the narrow path. The Lord has taken away all desire for worldly company: all my desires, now, are to attend on the means of grace. Blessed be his name! I often find him present in them. My mother and I, often remember the happy time we spent in your company at our house. She often speaks of it with great pleasure, and blesses the Lord for the change which grace has wrought in me."

"Lord's-day, 10.—(the last Sabbath.) Preached in the morning at Mary's Abbey, from Job xxxiii. 27, 28. 'He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.' A happy season. In the afternoon, having dined with Mr. W., he took me to Swift's Alley, the Baptist place of worship, where I gave an exhortation on brotherly love, and administered the Lord's supper. At Mr. W.'s motion, the church requested me to look out a suitable minister for them. In the evening I preached at Plunket Street, from 2 Timothy i. 18. 'The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day!' A very solemn season.

Monday, 11.—Met the dear christian friends, for the last time, at a prayer-meeting in Plunket Street. The Lord was there! Several friends spent the evening with us afterwards, at Mr. H.'s.

Tuesday, 12.—Went on board at four. Arrived at Liverpool on Thursday, and safely at home on Friday, July 15, 1796. Blessed be the preserver of men, the Saviour of sinners, and the Help of his servants, for evermore. Amen, amen!"

During his labours in Dublin, he was strongly solicited to settle in a very flattering situation in the neighbourhood, at the Black Rock, the residence of some of the most genteel families in the vicinity of Dublin; and a very liberal salary was offered him. On his positively declining it, mention was made of only six months of the year. When that was declined, three months were proposed; and when he was about to answer this in the negative, the party refused to receive his answer, desiring him to take time to consider of it He did so: and though he entertained a very grateful sense of the kindness and generosity expressed by the proposal, yet, after the maturest deliberation, he

thought it his duty to decline it. Mr. Pearce's modesty prevented his talking on such a subject; but it was known at the same time by his friend who accompanied him, and, since his death, has been frequently mentioned as an instance of his disinterested spirit.

His friends at Birmingham were ready to think it hard, that he should be so willing to leave them, to go on a mission among the heathen: but they could not well complain, and much less think ill of him, when they saw that such a willingness was more than could be effected by the most flattering prospects of a worldly nature, accompanied too with promising appearances of religious usefulness.

About a month after his return from Dublin, Mr. Pearce addressed a letter to Mr. Carey, from which the following extracts are selected:—

Birmingham, Aug. 12, 1796.

"O my dear brother, did you but know with what feelings I resume my pen, freely to correspond with you, after receiving your very affectionate letter to myself, and perusing that which you sent by the same conveyance to the Society, I am sure you will persuade yourself, that I have no common friendship for you, and that your regards are at least returned with equal ardour.

I fear (I had almost said) that I shall never see your face in the flesh; but if any thing can add to the joy which the presence of Christ, and conformity, perfect conformity to him, will afford in heaven, surely the certain prospect of meeting with my dear brother Carey there, is one of the greatest. Thrice happy should I be, if the providence of God would open a way for my partaking of your labours, your sufferings, and your pleasures, on this side the eternal world: but all my brethren here are of opinion, that I shall be more useful at home than abroad: and I, though reluctantly, submit. Yet I am truly with you in spirit. My heart

is at Mudnabatty, and at times I even hope to find my body there: but with the Lord I leave it. He knows my wishes, my motives, my regret. He knows all my soul; and depraved as it is, I feel an inexpressible satisfaction that he does know it. However, it is a humbling thought to me, that he sees I am unfit for such a station, and unworthy of such an honour as to bear his name among the heathen. But I must be thankful still, that though he appoints me not to a post in foreign service, he will allow me to stand sentinel at home. In this situation may I have grace to be faithful unto death!

With pleasure, approaching to rapture, I read the last accounts you sent us. I never expected immediate success: the prospect is truly greater than my most sanguine hopes. 'The kingdom of heaven is like to a little leaven hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.' Blessed be God! the leaven is in the meal, and its influence is already discoverable. A great God is doing great things by you. Go on, my dearest brother, go on; God will do greater things than these. Jesus is worthy of a world of praise: and shall Hindostan not praise him? Surely he shall see of the travail of his soul there, and the sower and the reaper shall rejoice together. Already the empire of darkness totters, and soon it shall doubtless fall. Blessed be the labourers in this important work; and blessed be He who giveth them hearts and strength to labour, and promises that they shall not labour in vain.

Do not fear the want of money. God is for us, and the silver and the gold are his; and so are the hearts of those who possess the most of it. I will travel from the Land's End to the Orkneys, but we will get money enough for all the demands of the mission. I have never had a fear on that head: a little exertion will do wonders; and past experience justifies every confidence. Men we only want; and God shall find them for us in due time.

I rejoice in contemplating a church of our Lord Jesus Christ in Bengal, formed upon his own plan. Why do not the Hindoo converts join in it? Lord help their unbelief! But perhaps the drop is now withheld, that you may by-and-by have the shower, and lift up your eyes, and say, 'These, whence came they? They fly as clouds, or as doves to their windows.' For three years, we read of few baptized by the first disciples of our Lord; but on the fourth, three thousand, and five thousand openly avowed him. The Lord send you such another pentecost!

I intend to write my dear brother a long letter. It will prove my desire to gratify him, if it do no more. I wish that I knew in what communications your other correspondents will be most deficient: then I would try to supply their omissions.

I will begin with myself: but I have nothing good to say. I think I am the most vile ungrateful servant that ever Jesus Christ employed in his church. At some times, I question whether I ever knew the grace of God in truth; and at others, I hesitate on the most important points of christian faith. I have lately had peculiar struggles of this kind with my own heart, and have often half concluded to speak no more in the name of the Lord. When I am preparing for the pulpit, I fear I am going to avow fables for facts, and doctrines of men for the truths of God. In conversation I am obliged to be silent, lest my tongue should belie my heart. In prayer I know not what to say, and at times think prayer altogether useless. Yet I cannot wholly surrender my hope, or my profession. Three things I find, above all others, tend to my preservation:—First, a recollection of a time when, at once, I was brought to abandon the practice of sins which the fear of damnation could never bring me to relinquish before. Surely, I say, this must be the finger of God, according to the scripture doctrine of regeneration:—Secondly, I feel such a consciousness of guilt, that

nothing but the gospel scheme can satisfy my mind respecting the hope of salvation :—Thirdly, I see that what true devotion does appear in the world, seems only to be found among those to whom Christ is precious.

But I frequently find a backwardness to secret prayer, and much deadness in it · and it puzzles me to see how this can be consistent with a life of grace. However, I resolve, that let what will become of me, I will do all I can for God while I live, and leave the rest to him ; and this I usually experience the best way to be at peace.

I believe, that if I were more fully given up to God, I should be free from these distressing workings of mind ; and then I long to be a missionary, where I should have temptations to nothing but to abound in the work of the Lord, and to lay myself entirely out for him. In such a situation, I think pride would have but little food, and faith more occasion for exercise ; so that the spiritual life and inward religion would thrive better than they do now.

At times, indeed, I do feel, I trust, genuine contrition, and sincerely lament my short-comings before God. Oh the sweets that accompany true repentance! Yes, I love to be abased before God. 'There it is I find my blessing.' May the Lord daily and hourly bring me low, and keep me so !

As to my public work, I find, whilst engaged in it, little cause to complain for want either of matter or words. My labours are acceptable, and not altogether unprofitable, to the hearers ; but what is this to me, if my own soul starve whilst others are fed by me? O my brother, I need your prayers : and I feel great satisfaction in the hope that you do not forget me. O that I may be kept faithful unto death ! Indeed, in the midst of my strugglings, a gleam of hope that I shall at last awake in the likeness of God, affords me greater joy than words can express. To be with Christ is far

better than to continue sinning here; but if the Lord hath any thing to do by me, his will be done.

I have never so fully opened my case to any one before. Your freedom on similar topics encourages me to make my complaint to you; and I think if you were near me, I should feel great relief in revealing to you all my heart. But I shall fatigue you with my moanings; so I will have done on this subject."

Mention has already been made of his having 'formed a pleasing acquaintance with several serious young gentlemen of the university of Dublin.' The following letter was addressed to one of them, the Rev. Mr. Matthias, a few months after his return :—

" have been employed this whole day in writing letters to Dublin; and it is the first day I have been able to redeem for that purpose. I will not consume a page in apology. Let it suffice to say, that necessity, not disinclination, has detained from my Irish friends those proofs of my gratitude and esteem, which in other circumstances I ought to have presented three months ago. I thought this morning of answering all their demands before I slept: but I have written so many sheets, and all full, that I find my eyes and my fingers both fail; and I believe this must close my intercourse with Dublin this day. When I shall be able to complete my purpose I do not know. To form friendships with good men is pleasant; but to maintain all that communion which friendship expects, is in some cases very difficult. Happy should I be, could I meet my Irish friends, instead of sitting in solitude, and maintaining, by the tedious medium of the pen, this distant intercourse. But 'the Lord, he shall choose our inheritance for us.' Were all the planets of our system embodied, and placed in close association, the light would be greater, and the object grander; but then, usefulness and systematic beauty consist in their dispersion: and what are we, my brother, but so many

satellites to Jesus, the great Sun of the christian system? Some, indeed, like burning Mercuries, keep nearer the luminary, and receive more of its light and heat; whilst others like the ringed planet, or the Georgium Sidus, preserve a greater distance, and reflect a lesser portion of his light: yet if, amidst all this diversity, they belong to the system, two things may be affirmed of all—all keep true to one centre, and borrow whatever light they have from one source. True it is, that the further they are from the sun, the longer are they in performing their revolutions: and is not this exemplified in us? The closer we keep to Jesus, the more brilliant are our graces; the more cheerful and active are our lives: but, alas! we are all comets; we all move in eccentric orbits: at one time glowing beneath the ray divine, at another congealing and freezing into icicles. 'Oh what a miracle to man is man!'

Little did I think when I began this letter that I should thus have indulged myself in allegory: but true friendship, I believe, always dictates extempore: and my friends must never expect from me a studied epistle. They can meet with better thoughts than I can furnish them with, in any bookseller's shop. It is not the dish, however well it may be cooked, that gives the relish, but the sweet sauce of friendship; and this I think sometimes makes even nonsense palatable.

But I have some questions to put to you: How are my college friends? How is their health? But chiefly, how are the interests of religion among you: are there any praying students added to your number? Do all those you thought well of continue to justify their profession? You know what it is that interests me. Pray tell me all, whether it makes me weep, or rejoice.

I hope Mr. H——'s ministry was blessed in Dublin. Do you know any instances of it? We must sow in hope, and I trust that we shall all gather fruit to eternal life, even where the buddings have never appeared

to us in this world. How is it with your soul? I thank God, I never, I think, rejoiced habitually so much in him as I have done of late. 'God is love.' That makes me happy. I rejoice that God reigns; that he reigns over all; over me; over my crosses, my comforts, my family, my friends, my senses, my mental powers, my designs, my words, my preaching, my conduct; that he is God over all, blessed for ever. I am willing to live, yet I long to die, to be freed from all error and all sin. I have nothing else to trouble me; no other cross to carry. The sun shines without, all day long; but I am sensible of internal darkness. Well, through grace, it shall be all light by and by. Yes, you and I shall be angels of light; all Mercuries then; all near the sun; always in motion; always glowing with zeal, and flaming with love. O for the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness!"

Awhile after this, he thus writes to his friend, Mr. Summers:—

"December, 1796.

"I rejoice that you have been supported under, and brought through your late trials. I do not wonder at it; for it is no more than God has promised; and though we may well wonder that he promises any thing, yet his performance is no just ground of surprise; and when we find ourselves so employed, we had better turn our wonder to our own unbelief, which for one moment suspected that God would not be as good as his word.

I have been lately more than ever delighted with the thought that God has engaged to do any thing for such worms as we. I never studied the deistical controversy so much, nor ever rejoiced in revelation more. Alas! what should we know, if God had not condescended to teach us? Paul very justly remarks, that no one knoweth any thing of God, but the Spirit of God, and he to whom the Spirit revealeth him. Now

the Spirit hath revealed God in the bible; but to an unbeliever the bible is a sealed book. He can know nothing from a book that he looks upon as an imposture, and yet there is no other book in which God is revealed; so that to reject the bible is to immerse ourselves in darkness, and whilst professing to be wise, actually to become fools: whereas, no sooner do we believe what the Spirit saith, than God is revealed to us, and 'in his light do we see light.'"

To the preceding may be added a few extracts of letters, which he addressed to his friends in 1797 and 1798.

To Dr. Ryland, March, 1797.

"During the last three weeks, I have at times been very poorly, with colds, &c. Am better now, and have been all along assisted in going through my public duties. Let us continue to pray for each other till death makes it a needless service. How uncertain is life, and what a blessing is death to a saint! I seem lately to feel a kind of affection for death. Methinks, if it were visible I could embrace it. 'Welcome herald, that bids the prisoner be free; that announces the dawn of everlasting day; that bids the redeemed come to Zion with everlasting joy, to be beyond the reach of an erroneous judgment, and a depraved heart.' To believe, to feel, to speak, to act exactly as God will have me; to be wholly absorbed and taken up with him; this, nothing short of this, can make my bliss complete. But all this is mine. Oh the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of redeeming love! It conquers my heart, and constrains me to yield myself a living sacrifice, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ.—My dear brother, we have had many happy meetings on earth: the best is in reserve.

'No heart upon earth can conceive
The bliss that in heaven they share;
Then who this dark world would not leave,
And cheerfully die to be there!'

Oh how full of love and joy and praise shall we be when that happy state is ours! Well, yet a little while, and he that shall come will come. Even so, come Lord Jesus! My dear brother, forgive the hasty effusions of a heart that loves you in the bowels of Jesus, and is always happy in testifying itself to be,

Affectionately your's, S. P."

To Mr. Cave, 1797.

On the falling away of some who had promised fair in religion.

"I thank you, my dear brother, for the confidence you repose in me, the affection you have for me, and the freedom with which you write to me. Assure yourself that I sincerely sympathize in the cutting events which you have lately experienced. Trying indeed! Your heart must bleed. Yet be not discouraged in your work. The more Satan opposes Christ, the more let us oppose him. He comes with great violence, because his time is short. His kingdom is on the decline, his strong holds are besieged, and he knows they must soon be taken. While it lasts, he is making desperate sallies on the armies of the Lamb. It is no great wonder that he fights and wounds a raw recruit now and then, who strays from the camp, and, thoughtless of the danger, keeps not close by the Captain's tent. I hope our glorious Leader will heal the wounded, and rescue the captive. He is sure to make reprisals. Christ will have ten to one. You will yet see his arm made bare. He shall go forth like a man of war. The prisoners shall be redeemed, and the old tyrant shall be cast into the bottomless pit. Be of good cheer, my fellow-soldier. The cause is not ours, but God's. Let us endure hardness, and still fight the good fight of faith. At last we shall come off conquerors, through Him who hath loved us.

I hope you have some causes for joy, as well as grief. I trust, though one, or two, or three fall, the tens and the twenties stand their ground. O do what you can to cheer them under the common trial. Let them not see a faint heart in you. Fight manfully still. Tell them to watch the more; to pray the harder; to walk the closer with God. So out of the eater shall come forth meat, and sweetness out of the strong."

To Mr. Bates and Mrs. Barnes, who had been burnt out of their residence.

"The many expressions of christian friendship which I received from you, and your affectionate families, during my late visit to London, will often excite grateful recollection in future, as they have almost daily, since I parted from you; and though I do not write this avowedly as a mere letter of acknowledgment, yet I wish it to assure you, that I am not forgetful of my friends, nor unthankful for their kindness. May all the favour you show to the servants of our common Lord for his sake, be amply recompensed in present peace, and future felicity, when the promise of him who cannot lie shall be fulfilled: 'A cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward.'

But, whilst you, my dear friends, live 'in hope of the glory' that remains 'to be revealed,' I am persuaded that you expect all this as the fruit of sovereign mercy, which first forms us to the mind of Christ, then accepts, and then rewards. Truly, if sinners be rewarded, it must be 'of grace and not of debt.' Yet it is a mercy of unspeakable magnitude, that grace should establish a connection between obedience and enjoyment, such a connection as at once ensures joy to the believer and glory to Christ.

O that our thoughts, our affections, our desires, may be much in heaven! Here, you have been taught, is

'no continuing city,' no certain place of abode; and though you have been taught it awfully in flames, yet if you learn it effectually, the terror of the means will be conquered by the excellency and glory of the consequences. Yes, my friends, 'in heaven we have a better and enduring substance:' the apartments there are more spacious; the society more sweet: the enjoyments more perfect; and all to last for ever. Well may christians 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God!'"

To Dr. Ryland, November 17, 1797.

"I feel much for you in relation both to the duties and trials of your present situation: at the same time I bless God who fixed you in it, because I am persuaded that it will be for his glory in the churches of Christ. And though none but those whose hands are full of religious concerns can guess at your difficulties, yet our blessed Redeemer knows them all. O my brother, you are travailing for Him who redeemed you by his blood; who sympathizes with you, and who will graciously crown you at last. Small as my trials are, I would turn smith, and work at the anvil and the forge, rather than bear them for any other master than Christ. Yet were they ten thousand times as many as they are, the thought of their being for him, I trust, would sweeten them all.

I have reason to be very thankful for much pleasure of late, both as a christian, and a minister. I have never felt so deeply my need of a divine Redeemer, and seldom possessed such solid confidence that he is mine. I want more and more to become a little child, to dwindle into nothing in my own esteem, to renounce my own wisdom, power, and goodness, and simply look to, and live upon Jesus for all. I am ashamed that I have so much pride, so much self-will. O my Saviour, make me 'meek and lowly in heart!' In this alone I find 'rest to my soul.'

I could say much of what Immanuel has done for my soul; but I fear lest even this should savour of vanity. When shall I be like my Lord? O welcome death, when I have nothing more to do for Christ. To him, till then, may I live every day and every hour Rather may I be annihilated than not live to him.

You will rejoice with me to hear that we have a pleasing prospect as a church. Several very hopeful, and some very valuable characters are about to join us. Lord, carry on thy work."

To Mrs. Pearce, on the dangerous Illness of one of his Children. Portsmouth, Jan. 29, 1798.

"Ignorant of the circumstances of our dear child, how shall I address myself to her dearer mother. With a fluttering heart and a trembling hand, I, in this uncertainty, resume my pen. One consideration tranquillizes my mind, I and mine are in the hands of God; the wise, the good, the indulgent Parent of mankind. Whatever he does is best. I am prepared for all his will, and hope that I shall never have a feeling, whose language is not, 'Thy will be done.'

I am most kindly entertained here by Mr. and Mrs. Shoveller; and, except my dear Sarah's presence, feel myself at home. They have had greater trials than we can at present know. They have attended seven children to the gloomy tomb: they have been supported beneath their loss, by Him who hath said, 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be.' Mrs. S. tells me, she blessed God for all.' May my dear Sarah be enabled to do the same, whatever the result may prove. Tomorrow I expect another letter from you; yet, lest you should too much feel my absence, I will not delay forwarding this a single post. O that it may prove in some degree, a messenger of consolation.

Yesterday I preached three times: God was very good. I received your letter before the first service.

you may be assured that I bore you on my heart in the presence of my Lord and yours; nor shall I pray in vain: he will either restore the child, or support you under the loss of it. I dare not pray with importunity for any earthly good: for 'who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow?' But strength to bear the loss of earthly comforts, he has promised: for that I importune; and that, I doubt not, will be granted.

In a house directly opposite to the window before which I now write, a wife, a mother, is just departed! Why am I not a bereaved husband? Why are not my children motherless? When we compare our condition with our wishes, we often complain: but if we compare it with that of many around us, our complaints will be exchanged for gratitude and praise."

To R. Bowyer, Esq. February 14, 1798.

"Not a day has hurried by, since I parted with my dear friends in Pall Mall, but they have been in my affectionate remembrance; but not being able to speak with any satisfaction respecting our dear child, I have withheld myself from imparting new anxieties to bosoms already alive to painful sensibility.

At length, however, a gracious God puts it in my power to say that there is hope. After languishing between life and death for many days she now seems to amend. We flatter ourselves that she has passed the crisis, and will yet be restored to our arms; but parental fears forbid too strong a confidence It may be that our most merciful God saw that the shock of a sudden removal would be too strong for the tender feelings of a mother; and so by degrees prepares for the stroke which must fall at last. However, she is in the best hands, and we are, I hope, preparing for submission to whatever may be the blessed will of God.

I was brought home in safety, and feel myself in

much better health in consequence of my journey. O that it may be all consecrated to my Redeemer's praise!

Happy should I be, if I could oftener enjoy your friendly society; but we must wait for the full accomplishment of our social wishes till we come to that better world, for which divine grace is preparing us. There our best, our brightest hopes, and there our warmest affections must be found. Could we have all we want below, we should be reluctant to ascend, when Jesus calls us home. No, this is not our rest; it is polluted with sin, and dashed with sorrow: but though our pains in themselves are evil, yet our God turns the curse into a blessing, and makes all that we meet with accomplish our good.

What better can I wish my friends, than the humble place of Mary, or the happy rest of John. Faith can enjoy them both, till actually we fall at the Saviour's feet, and lean upon his bosom, when we see him as he is.

'Oh the delights, the heavenly joys,
The glories of the place,
Where Jesus sheds the brightest beams
Of his o'erflowing grace!'

CHAPTER IV.—*An account of his last Affliction, and the holy and happy exercises of his mind under it.*

Early in October, 1798, Mr. Pearce attended at the Kettering ministers' meeting, and preached from Psalm xc. 16, 17. "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." He was observed to be singularly solemn and affectionate in that discourse. If he had known it to be the last time that he should address his brethren in that part of the country, he could scarcely have felt or spoken in a more interest-

ing manner. It was a discourse full of instruction, full of a holy unction, and that seemed to breathe an apostolical ardour. On his return, he preached at Market-Harborough; and riding home the next day in company with his friend, Mr. Summers of London, they were overtaken with rain. Mr. Pearce was wet through his clothes, and towards evening, complained of a chillness. A slight hoarseness followed. He preached several times after this, which brought on an inflammation, and issued in a consumption. It is probable, that if his constitution had not been previously impaired, such effects might not have followed in this instance. His own ideas on this subject are expressed in a letter to Dr. Ryland, dated Dec. 4, 1798; and in another to Mr. King, dated from Bristol, on his way to Plymouth, March 30, 1799. In the former, he says:—"Ever since my Christmas journey last year to Sheepshead, Nottingham, and Leicester, on the mission business, I have found my constitution greatly debilitated, in consequence of a cold caught after the unusual exertions which circumstances then demanded: so that from a frame that could endure any weather, I have since been too tender to encounter a single shower without danger; and the duties of the Lord's-day, which, as far as bodily strength went, I could perform with little fatigue, have since frequently overcome me. But the severe cold I caught in my return from the last Kettering ministers'-meeting, has affected me so much, that I have sometimes concluded I must give up preaching entirely; for though my head and spirits are better than for two years past, yet my stomach is so very weak, that I cannot pray in my family without frequent pauses for breath, and in the pulpit it is labour and agony, which must be felt to be conceived of. I have, however, made shift to preach sometimes thrice, but mostly only twice on a Lord's-day, till the last; when the morning sermon only, though I delivered it with great pleasure of mind, and with as much caution as to my voice as possible,

yet cost me so much labour as threw me into a fever till the next day, and prevented my sleeping all night." In the latter, he thus writes :—"Should my life be spared, I, and my family, and all my connexions will stand indebted, under God, to you. Unsuspecting of danger myself, I believe I should have gone on with my own exertions, till the grave had received me. Your attention sent Mr. B. (the apothecary) to me, and then I first learned what I have since been increasingly convinced of – that I was rapidly destroying the vital principle. And the kind interest you have taken in my welfare ever since has often drawn the grateful tear from my eye. May the God of heaven and earth reward your kindness to his unworthy servant, and save you from all the evils from which your distinguished friendship would have saved me!"

Such were his ideas. His labours were certainly abundant; perhaps too great for his constitution: but it is probable that nothing was more injurious to his health than a frequent exposure to night air, and an inattention to the necessity of changing damp clothes.

Hitherto we have seen in Mr. Pearce the active, assiduous, and laborious servant of Jesus Christ; but now we see him laid by from his work, wasting away by slow degrees, patiently enduring the will of God, and cheerfully waiting for his dissolution. And as here is but little to narrate, I shall content myself with copying his letters, or extracts from them, to his friends, in the order of time in which they were written, only now and then dropping a few hints to furnish the reader with the occasions of some of them.

To Dr. Ryland, Birmingham, October 8, 1798.

"O my dear brother, your letter of the 5th, which I received this morning, has made me thankful for all my pulpit agonies, as they enabled me to weep with a weeping brother. They have been of use to me in other respects: particularly, in teaching me the im-

portance of attaining and maintaining that spirituality and pious ardour in which I have found the most effectual relief; so that on the whole I must try to 'glory in tribulations also.' I trust I often can when the conflict is past; but to glory 'in' them, especially in mental distress—*hic labor, hoc opus est.*

But how often has it been found, that when ministers have felt themselves most embarrassed, the most effectual good has been done to the people. O for hearts entirely resigned to the will of God!"

To a young man, who had applied to him for advice, how he should best improve his time, previous to his going to the Bristol Academy, he wrote:

Birmingham, Nov. 13, 1798.

"I CAN only confess my regret at not replying to yours at a much earlier period, and assure you that the delay has been accidental, and not designed. I feel the importance of your request for advice. I was sensible it deserved some consideration before it was answered. I was full of business at the moment. I put it by, and it was forgotten; and now it is too late, The time of your going to Bristol draws nigh. If, instead of an opinion respecting the best way of occupying your time before you go, you will accept a little counsel during your continuance there, I shall be happy at any time to contribute such a mite as my experience and observation have put in my power.

At present, the following rules appear of so much moment, that, were I to resume a place in any literary establishment, I would religiously adopt them as the standard of my conduct: First, I would cultivate a spirit of habitual devotion. Warm piety, connected with my studies, and especially at my entrance upon them, would not only assist me in forming a judgment on their respective importance, and secure the blessing of God upon them; but would so cement the religious feeling with the literary pursuit, as might abide with

me for life. The habit of uniting these, being once formed, would, I hope be never lost; and I am sure, that, without this, I shall both pursue trivial and unworthy objects, and those that are worthy I shall pursue for a wrong end.—Secondly, I would determine on a uniform submission to the instructions of my preceptor, and study those things which would give him pleasure. If he be not wiser than I am, for what purpose do I come under his care? I accepted the pecuniary help of the Society on condition of conforming to its will; and it is the Society's will that my tutor should govern me. My example will have influence: let me not, by a single act of disobedience, or by a word that implies dissatisfaction, sow the seeds of discord in the bosom of my companions.—Thirdly, I would pray and strive for the power of self-government, to form no plan, to utter not a word, to take no step, under the mere influence of passion. Let my judgment be often asked, and let me always give it time to answer. Let me always guard against a light or trifling spirit; and particularly as I shall be amongst a number of youths, whose years will incline them all to the same frailty.—Fourthly, I would in all my weekly and daily pursuits observe the strictest order. Always let me act by a plan. Let every hour have its proper pursuits; from which let nothing, but a settled conviction that I can employ it to better advantage, ever cause me to deviate. Let me have fixed time for prayer, meditation, reading, languages, correspondence, recreation, sleep, &c.—Fifthly, I would not only assign to every hour its proper pursuit; but what I did, I would try to do it with all my might. The hours at such a place are precious beyond conception, till the student enters on life's busy scenes. Let me set the best of my class ever before me, and strive to be better than they. In humility and diligence, let me aim to be the first.—Sixthly, I would particularly avoid a versatile habit. In all things I would

persevere. Without this, I may be a gaudy butterfly; but never, like the bee, will my hive bear examining. Whatever I take in hand, let me first be sure I understand it, then duly consider it, and, if it be good, let me adopt and use it.

To these, my dear brother, let me add three or four things more minute, but which I am persuaded will help you much. Guard against a large acquaintance while you are a student. Bristol friendship, while you sustain that character, will prove a vile thief, and rob you of many an invaluable hour. Get two or three of the students, whose piety you most approve, to meet for one hour in a week for experimental conversation, and mutual prayer. I found this highly beneficial; though, strange to tell, by some we were persecuted for our practice! Keep a diary. Once a week at farthest, call yourself to an account: what advances you have made in your different studies; in divinity, history, languages, natural philosophy, style, arrangement; and, amidst all, do not forget to enquire, Am I more fit to serve and to enjoy God than I was last week? S. P."

On Dec. 2, 1798, he delivered his last sermon. The subject was taken from Dan. x. 19. "O man, greatly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee; be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my Lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me." "Amongst all the old testament saints," said he, in his introduction to that discourse, "there is not one whose virtues were more, and whose imperfections were fewer, than those of Daniel. By the history given of him in this book, which yet seems not to be complete, he appears to have excelled among the excellent." Doubtless, no one was farther from his thoughts than himself: several of his friends, however, could not help applying it to him, and that with a painful apprehension of what followed soon after.

To Mr. Cave, Leicester. *Dec. 4th*, 1798.

" .... Blessed be God, my mind is calm; and, though my body be weakness itself, my spirits are good, and I can write as well as ever, though I can hardly speak two sentences without a pause. All is well, brother! all is well, for time and eternity. My soul rejoices in the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure. Peace from our dear Lord Jesus be with your spirit, as it is (yea, more also) with

Your affectionate brother,—S. P."

To Dr. Ryland. *Dec.* 9, 1798. *Lord's-day Evening.*

" My dear brother,

After a sabbath—such a one I never knew before—spent in an entire seclusion from the house and ordinances of my God, I seek christian converse with you, in a way in which I am yet permitted to have intercourse with my brethren. The day after I wrote to you last, my medical attendant laid me under the strictest injunctions not to speak again in public for one month at least. He says that my stomach is become so irritable, through repeated inflammations, that conversation, unless managed with great caution, would be dangerous;—that he does not think my present condition alarming, provided I take rest; but without that, he intimated my life was in great danger. He forbids my exposing myself to the evening air, on any account, and going out of doors, or to the door, unless when the air is dry and clear, so that I am, during the weather we now have in Birmingham (very foggy), a complete prisoner; and the repeated cautions from my dear and affectionate friends, whose solicitude, I conceive, far exceeds the danger, compels me to a rigid observance of the doctor's rules.

This morning brother Pope took my place; and in

the afternoon, Mr. Brewer (who has discovered uncommon tenderness and respect for me and the people, since he knew my state) preached a very affectionate sermon, from 1 Sam. iii. 18. 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.' By what I hear, his sympathizing observations, in relation to the event which occasioned his being then in my pulpit, drew more tears from the people's eyes than a dozen such poor creatures as their pastor could deserve. But I have····blessed be God, long had the satisfaction of finding myself embosomed in friendship ····· the friendship of the people of my charge: though I lament their love should occasion them a pang····but thus it is·····our heavenly Father sees, that, for our mixed characters, a mixed state is best.

I anticipated a day of gloom: but I had unexpected reason to rejoice, that the shadow of death was turned into the joy of the morning; and though I said, with perhaps before unequalled feeling, 'How amiable are thy tabernacles!' yet I found the God of Zion does not neglect the dwellings of Jacob. My poor wife was much affected, at so novel a thing as leaving me behind her, and so it was a dewy morning; but the Sun of righteousness soon arose, and shed such ineffable delight throughout my soul, that I could say, 'It is good to be here.' Motive to resignation and gratitude also crowded upon motive, till my judgment was convinced that I ought to rejoice in the Lord exceedingly, and so my whole soul took its fill of joy. May I, if it be my Saviour's will, feel as happy when I come to die! When my poor Sarah lay at the point of death, for some days after her first lying-in, toward the latter days, I enjoyed such support, and felt my will so entirely bowed down to that of God, that I said in my heart, 'I shall never fear another trial····He that sustained me amidst this flame, will defend me from every spark!' And this confidence I long enjoyed. But that was nearly six years ago, and I had almost forgotten

the land of the Hermonites and the hill Mizar But the Lord has prepared me to receive a fresh display of his fatherly care, and his (shall I call it) punctilious veracity. If I should be raised up again, I shall be able to preach on the faithfulness of God more experimentally than ever. Perhaps some trial is coming on, and I am to be instrumental in preparing them for it; or if not, if I am to depart hence to be no more seen, I know the Lord can carry on his work as well without me as with me. He who redeemed the sheep with his blood, will never suffer them to perish for want of shepherding, especially since he himself is the chief Shepherd of souls. But my family! Ah, there I find my faith but still imperfect. However, I do not think the Lord will ever take me away, till he helps me to leave my fatherless children in his hands, and trust my widow also with him. 'His love in times past,' and I may add in times present too, 'forbids me think, he will leave me at last in trouble to sink.'

Whilst my weakness was gaining ground, I used to ask myself how I could like to be laid by? I have dreamed that this was the case; and both awake and asleep, I felt as though it were an evil that could not be borne: but now, I find the Lord can fit the back to the burden; and though I think I love the thought of serving Christ at this moment better than ever, yet he has made me willing to be····nothing, if he please to have it so; and now my happy heart 'could sing itself away to everlasting bliss.'

Oh what a mercy that I have not brought on my affliction by serving the devil! What a mercy that I have so many dear sympathizing friends! What a mercy that I have so much dear domestic comfort! What a mercy that I am in no violent bodily pain! What a mercy that I can read and write without doing myself an injury! What a mercy that my animal spirits have all the time this has been coming on (ever since the last Kettering meeting of ministers) been

vigorous—free from dejection! And, which I reckon among the greatest of this day's privileges, what a mercy that I have been able to employ myself for Christ and his dear cause to-day; as I have been almost wholly occupied in the concerns of the (I hope) reviving church at Bromsgrove, and the infant church at Cradley! O, my dear brother, it is all mercy; is it not? O help me then in His praise, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.

Ought I to apologize for this experimental chat with you, who have concerns to transact of so much more importance than any that are confined to an individual? Forgive me, if I have intruded too much on your time—but do not forget to praise, on my behalf, a faithful God. I shall now leave room against I have some business to write about—till then adieu—but let us not forget that this God is our God for ever and ever, and will be our guide even until death. Amen. Amen. We shall soon meet in heaven."

To R. Bowyer, Esq.

"..... I have overdone myself in preaching. I am now ordered to lie by, and not even to converse, without great care; nor indeed, till to-day, have I for some time been able to utter a sentence, without a painful effort. Blessed be God! I have been filled all through my affliction with peace and joy in believing; and at one time, when I thought I was entering the valley of death, the prospect beyond was so full of glory, that but for the sorrow it would have occasioned to some who would be left behind, I should have longed that moment to have mounted the skies. O, my friend, what a mercy that I am not receiving the wages of sin; that my health has not been impaired by vice; but that, on the contrary, I am 'bearing in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.' To him be all the praise! Truly, I have proved that God is faithful; and meet

cheerfully would I take double the affliction for one half of the joy and sweetness which have attended it. Accept a sermon, which is this day published.*—S. P."

About this time, the congregation at Cannon Street was supplied for several months by Mr. Ward, afterwards the missionary to India. Here that amiable young man became intimately acquainted with Mr. Pearce, and conceived a most affectionate esteem for him. In a letter to a friend, dated January 5, 1799, he writes as follows :—

"I am happy in the company of dear brother Pearce. I have seen more of God in him, than in any other person I ever knew. Oh how happy should I be to live and die with him! When well, he preaches three times on a Lord's-day, and two or three times in the week besides. He instructs the young people in the principles of religion, natural philosophy, astronomy, &c. They have a benevolent society, from the funds of which they distribute forty or fifty pounds a-year to the poor of the congregation. They have a sick society for visiting the afflicted in general; a book society at the chapel; a Lord's-day school, at which more than two hundred children are instructed. Add to this, missionary business, visiting the people, an extensive correspondence, two volumes of mission history preparing for the press, &c. and then you will see something of the soul of Pearce. He is everywhere venerated, though but a young man; and all the kind, tender, gentle affections, make him as a little child at the feet of his Saviour. W. W."

In February, he rode to the opening of a Baptist meeting-house, at Bedworth; but did not engage in

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* The last but one he ever preached, entitled, "Motives to Gratitude." It was delivered on the day of National Thanksgiving, and printed at the request of his own congregation.

any of the services. Here several of his brethren saw him for the last time. Soon afterwards, writing to the Compiler of these Memoirs, he says :—" The Lord's-day after I came home I tried to speak a little after sermon. It inflamed my lungs afresh, produced phlegm, coughing, and spitting of blood. Perhaps I may never preach more. Well, the Lord's will be done. I thank him that he ever took me into his service; and now, if he see fit to give me a discharge, I submit."

During the above meeting, a word was dropped by one of his brethren, which he took as a reflection, though nothing was farther from the intention of the speaker. It wrought upon his mind; and in a few days after he wrote as follows :—" Do you remember what passed at B———? Had I not been accustomed to receive plain, friendly remarks from you, I should have thought you meant to insinuate a reproof. If you did, tell me plainly. If you did not, it is all at an end. You will not take my naming it unkind, although I should be mistaken ; since affectionate explanations are necessary, when suspicions arise, to the preservation of friendship ; and I need not say that I hold the preservation of your friendship in no small account. S. P."

The above is copied, not only to set forth the spirit and conduct of Mr. Pearce in a case wherein he felt himself aggrieved; but to show in how easy and amiable a manner thousands of mistakes might be rectified, and differences prevented by a frank and timely explanation.

To Mr. Comfield, Northampton. March 4, 1799.

" I could wish my sympathies to be as extensive as human – I was going to say (and why not ?) as animal misery. The very limited comprehension of the human intelligence forbids this indeed, and whilst I am attempting

to participate, as far as the news of affliction reaches me, I find the same events do not often produce equal feelings. We measure our sympathies, not by the causes of sorrow, but by the sensibilities of the sorrowful: hence I abound in feeling on your account. The situation of your family must have given distress to a president of any character; but in you it must have produced agonies. I know the tenderness of your heart: your feelings are delicately strong. You must feel much, or nothing; and he that knows you, and does not feel much when you feel, must be a brute.

May the fountain of mercy supply you with the cheering stream! May your sorrow be turned into joy!

I am sure that I ought to value more than ever your friendship for me. You have remembered me, not merely in my affliction, but in your own. Our friendship, our benevolence must never be compared with that of Jesus: but it is truly delightful to see the disciple treading, though at a humble distance, in the footsteps of a Master, who, amidst the tortures of crucifixion, exercised forgiveness to his murderers, and the tenderness of filial piety to a disconsolate mother! When we realize the scene, how much do our imaginations embrace—the persons—the circumstances—the words—'Woman, behold thy son! John, behold thy mother!' S. P."

By the above letter, the reader will perceive, that while deeply afflicted himself he felt in the tenderest manner for the afflictions of others.

To Mr. Fuller. *March* 23, 1799.

After saying that he was now setting out for Plymouth; and after observing the great danger he was supposed to be in, with respect to a consumption, he adds:—"But thanks be to God, who giveth my heart the victory, let my poor body be consumed, or preserved. In the

thought of leaving, I feel a momentary gloom ; but in the thought of going, a heavenly triumph.

'Oh to grace how great a debtor!'

Praise God with me and for me, my dear brother ; and let us not mind dying any more than sleeping. No, no; let every christian sing the loudest as he gets the nearest to the presence of his God. Eternally your's, in Him who hath washed us both in his blood.

S. P."

It seems, that, in order to avoid wounding Mrs. P.'s feelings, he deferred the settlement of his affairs till he arrived at Bristol ; from whence he wrote to his friend, Mr. King, requesting him to become an executor. On his receiving a favourable answer, he replied as follows :—

Bristol, April 6, 1799.

"Your letter, just received, affected me too much, with feelings of sympathy and gratitude, to remain unanswered a single post. Most heartily do I thank you for accepting a service, which friendship alone can render agreeable in the most simple cases. Should that service demand your activities at an early period, may no unforeseen occurrence increase the necessary care. But may the Father of the fatherless, and Judge of the widows, send you a recompence into your own bosom, equal to all that friendship, to which, under God, I have been so much indebted in life, and reposing on whose bosom, even death itself loses a part of its gloom. In you, my children will find another father—in you, my wife another husband. Your tenderness will sympathize with the one, under the most distressing sensibilities ; and your prudent counsels be a guide to the others, through the unknown mazes of inexperienced youth. Enough..... blessed God! my soul prostrates, and adores thee for such a friend."

To Mr. Fuller, from Plymouth. April 18, 1799.

"The last time that I wrote to you was at the close of a letter sent to you by brother Ryland. I did not like that postscript form; it looked so card-like, as to make me fear that you would deem it unbrotherly. After all, perhaps, you thought nothing about it; and my anxieties might arise only from my weakness, which seems to be constantly increasing my sensibilities. If ever I felt love in its tenderness for my friends, it has been since my affliction. This, in great measure, is no more than the love of publicans and harlots, who love those that love them. I never conceived myself by a hundred degrees so interested in the regards of my friends as this season of affliction has manifested I was; and therefore, so far from claiming any reward for loving them in return, I should account myself a monster of ingratitude were it otherwise. Yet there is something in affliction itself, which, by increasing the delicacy of our feelings, and detaching our thoughts from the usual round of objects, which present themselves to the mind when in a state of health, may be easily conceived to make us susceptible of stronger and more permanent impressions of an affectionate nature.

I heard at Bristol, that you and your friends had remembered me in your prayers at Kettering. Whether the Lord whom we serve may see fit to answer your petitions on my account or not, may they at least be returned into your own bosoms!

For the sake of others, I should be happy, could I assure you that my health was improving. As to myself, I thank God, that I am not without a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better. I find that neither in sickness, nor in health, can I be so much as I wish like Him whom I love. 'To die is gain' O to gain that state, those feelings, that character, which perfectly accord with the mind of Christ, and are attended with the full persuasion of his com-

plete and everlasting approbation! I want no heaven but this; and to gain this most gladly would I this moment expire. But, if to abide in the flesh be more needful for an individual of my fellow-men, Lord let thy will be done; only let Christ be magnified by me, whether in life or death!"

To Mr. Ward, from Plymouth. April 22, 1799.

"Most affectionately do I thank you for your letter, so full of information and of friendship. To our common Friend, who is gone into heaven, where he ever sitteth at the right hand of God for us, I commend you. Whether I die, or live, God will take care of you till he has ripened you for the common salvation. Then shall I meet my dear brother Ward again; and who can tell how much more interesting our intercourse in heaven will be made by the scenes that most distress our poor spirits here. O had I none to live for, I had rather die than live, that I may be at once like Him whom I love. But while he ensures me grace, why should I regret the delay of glory! No: I will wait his will, who performeth all things for me.

My dear brother, had I strength, I should rejoice to acquaint you with the wrestlings and the victories, the hopes, and the fears, the pleasures and the pangs, which I have lately experienced. But I must forbear. All I can now say is, that God hath done me much good by all, and made me very thankful for all he has done.

Alas! I shall see you no more. I cannot be at Olney on the 7th of May. The journey would be my death. But the Lord whom you serve will be with you then and for ever. My love to all the dear assembled saints, who will give you their benedictions at that solemn season."

To Mr. King, from Plymouth. April 23, 1799.

"I have the satisfaction to inform you, that at length my complaint appears to be removed, and that

I am by degrees returning to my usual diet, by which, with the divine blessing, I hope to be again strengthened for the discharge of the duties, and the enjoyment of the pleasures, which await me among the dear people of my charge.

I am indeed informed by a medical attendant here, that I shall never be equal to the labours of my past years, and that my return to moderate efforts must be made by slow degrees. As the path of duty, I desire to submit; but, after so long a suspension from serving the Redeemer in his church, my soul pants for usefulness more extensive than ever, and I long to become an apostle to the world. I do not think I ever prized the ministerial work so much as I now do. Two questions have been long before me. The first was, Shall I live or die? The second, If I live, how will my life be spent? With regard to the former, my heart answered, 'It is no matter, all is well; for my own sake, I need not be taught that it is best to be with Christ: but for the sake of others, it may be best to abide in the body; I am in the Lord's hands, let him do by me as seemeth him best for me and mine, and for his cause and honour in the world! But as to the second question, I could hardly reconcile myself to the thoughts of living, unless it were to promote the interest of my Lord: and if my disorder should so far weaken me, as to render me incapable of the ministry, nothing then appeared before me but gloom and darkness. However, I will hope in the Lord, that though he hath chastened me sorely, yet since he hath not given me over unto death, sparing mercy will be followed with strength, that I may show forth his praise in the land of the living.

I am still exceedingly weak; more so than at any period before I left home, except the first week of my lying by; but I am getting strength, though slowly. It is impossible at present to fix any time for my return. It grieves me that the patience of the dear peo-

ple should be so long tried; but the trial is as great on my part as it can be on theirs, and we must pity and pray for one another. It is now a task for me to write at all, or this should have been longer."

The reader has seen how much he regretted being absent from the solemn designation of the Missionaries at Olney. He, however, addressed the following lines to Mr. Fuller, which were read at the close of that meeting, to the dissolving of nearly the whole assembly in tears :—

Tamerton, May 2, 1799.

" .....O that the Lord, who is unconfined by place or condition, may copiously pour out upon you all the rich effusions of his Holy Spirit on the approaching day! My most hearty love to each Missionary, who may then encircle the throne of grace. Happy men! Happy women! You are going to be fellow-labourers with Christ himself! I congratulate —I almost envy you; yet I love you, and can scarcely now forbear dropping a tear of love as each of your names passes across my mind. Oh what promises are yours; and what a reward! Surely heaven is filled with double joy, and resounds with unusual acclamations, at the arrival of each missionary there. O be faithful, my dear brethren, my dear sisters, be faithful unto death, and all this joy is yours! Long as I live, my imagination will be hovering over you in Bengal; and should I die, if separate spirits be allowed a visit to the world they have left, methinks mine would soon be at Mudnabatty, watching your labours, your conflicts, and your pleasures, whilst you are 'always abounding in the work of the Lord.' S. P."

To Dr. Ryland, from Plymouth. May 14, 1799.

" My dear Brother,

Yours of the 11th instant I have just received, and thank you for your continued concern for your poor unworthy brother.

I have suffered much in my health since I wrote to you last, by the increase of my feverish complaint, which filled me with heat and horror all night, and in the day sometimes almost suffocated me with the violence of its paroxysms. I am extremely weak; and now, that warm weather which I came into Devon to seek, I dread as much as the cold, because it excites the fever. I am happy, however, in the Lord. I have not a wish to live or die, but as he pleases. I truly enjoy the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and would not be without his divine atonement, whereon to rest my soul, for ten thousand worlds. I feel quite weaned from earth, and all things in it. Death has lost his sting, the grave his horrors, and the attractions of heaven, I had almost said, are sometimes violent.

'Oh to grace how great a debtor!'

But I am wearied. May all grace abound towards my dear brother, and his affectionate, S. P."

To Mr. Pope, from Plymouth. May 24, 1799.

"I cannot write much; this I believe is the only letter I have written (except to my wife) since I wrote to you last. My complaint has issued in a confirmed, slow, nervous fever; which has wasted my spirits and strength, and taken a great part of the little flesh I had when in health, away from me. The symptoms have been very threatening, and I have repeatedly thought, that let the physician do what he will, he cannot keep me long from those heavenly joys, for which, blessed be God, I have lately been much longing; and were it not for my dear people and family, I should have earnestly prayed for leave to depart, and to be with Christ, which is so much better than to abide in this vain, suffering, sinning world.

The doctors, however, now pronounce my case very hopeful, and say there is little or no danger, but that all these complaints require a great deal of time to get rid of. I still feel myself on precarious ground, but

quite resigned to the will of Him, who, unworthy as I am, continues daily to 'fill my soul with joy and peace in believing.' Yes, my dear friend, now my soul feels the value of a free, full, and everlasting salvation, and, what is more, I do enjoy that salvation; while I rest all my hope on the Son of God in human nature, dying on the cross for me. To me now, health or sickness, pain or ease, life or death, are things indifferent. I feel so happy in being in the hands of infinite Love, that when the severest strokes are laid upon me, I receive them with pleasure, because they come from my heavenly Father's hands! 'Oh! to grace how great a debtor, &c.'

S. P."

Plymouth, May 31, 1799. *To the Church in Cannon Street.*

"To the dear people of my charge, the flock of Christ, assembling in Cannon Street, Birmingham; their afflicted, but affectionate pastor, presents his love in Christ Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep.

My dearest, dearest friends and brethren,

Separated as I have been a long time from you, and during that time of separation having suffered much both in body and mind, yet my heart has still been with you, participating in your sorrows, uniting in your prayers, and rejoicing with you in the hope of that glory to which divine faithfulness has engaged to bring us, and for which our heavenly Father, by all his providences, and by every operation of his Holy Spirit, is daily preparing us.

Never, my dear brethren, did I so much rejoice in our being made 'partakers of the heavenly calling,' as during my late afflictions. The sweet thoughts of glory, where I shall meet my dear Lord Jesus, with all his redeemed ones, perfectly freed from all that sin which now burdens us, and makes us groan from day to day, this transports my soul, whilst out of weakness I am made strong, and at times am enabled to glory

even in my bodily infirmities, that the power of Christ, in supporting when flesh and heart fail, may the more evidently rest upon me. O my dear brethren and sisters, let me, as one alive almost from the dead, let me exhort you to stand fast in that blessed gospel, which, for ten years I have now preached unto you: the gospel of the grace of God: the gospel of free, full, and everlasting salvation, founded on the sufferings and death of God manifest in the flesh. Look much at this all-amazing scene!

'Behold! a God descends and dies,
To save my soul from gaping hell;'

And then say, whether any poor broken-hearted sinner need be afraid to venture his hopes of salvation on such a sacrifice; especially, since He who is thus 'mighty to save,' hath said, that 'whosoever cometh to him he will in no wise cast out.' You, beloved, who have found the peace-speaking virtue of this blood of atonement, must not be satisfied with what you have already known or enjoyed. The only way to be constantly happy, and constantly prepared for the most awful changes which we must all experience, is to be constantly looking and coming to a dying Saviour; renouncing all our own worthiness; cleaving to the loving Jesus as our all in all; giving up every thing, however valuable to our worldly interests, that clashes with our fidelity to Christ; begging, that of his fulness, we may receive 'grace upon grace,' whilst our faith actually relies on his power and faithfulness, for the full accomplishment of every promise in his word that we plead with him, and guarding against every thing that might, for a moment, bring distance and darkness between your souls and your precious Lord. If you thus live (and O that you may daily receive fresh life from Christ so to do) 'the peace of God will keep your hearts and minds,' and you will be filled with 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

As a church, you cannot conceive what pleasure I have enjoyed in hearing that you are in peace; that you attend prayer-meetings; that you seem to be stirred up of late, for the honour and prosperity of religion. Go on in these good ways, my beloved friends, and assuredly the God of peace will be with you. Yea, if after all I should be taken entirely from you, yet God will surely visit you, and never leave you, nor forsake you.

As to my health, I seem on the whole to be still mending, though but very slowly. The fever troubles me often, both by day and night; but my strength increases. I long to see your faces in the flesh; yea, when I thought myself near the gates of the grave, I wished, if it were the Lord's will, to depart among those whom I so much loved. But I am in good hands: and all must be right.

I thank both you and the congregation most affectionately, for all the kindness you have shown, respecting me and my family, during my absence. The Lord return it a thousand fold! My love to every one, both old and young, rich and poor, as though named. The Lord bless to your edification the occasional ministry which you enjoy. I hope you regularly attend upon it, and keep together, as 'the horses in Pharaoh's chariot.' I pray much for you: pray, still pray for your very affectionate, though unworthy pastor,—S. P."

In a postscript to Mr. King, he says, "I have made an effort to write this letter: my affections would take no denial; but it has brought on the fever."

Towards the latter end of May, when Mr. Ward and his companions were just ready to set sail, a consultation concerning Mr. Pearce was held on board the Criterion, in which all the missionaries, and some of the members of the Baptist Missionary Society were present. It was well known that he had for several years been engaged in preparing materials for a

History of Missions, to be comprised in two volumes octavo: and as the sending of the gospel among the heathen had so deeply occupied his heart, considerable expectations had been formed by religious people, of his producing an interesting work on the subject. The question now was, Could not this performance be finished by other hands, and the profits of it be appropriated to the benefit of Mr. Pearce's family? It was admitted by all, that this work would, partly from its own merits, and partly from the great interest which the author justly possessed in the public esteem, be very productive; and that it would be a delicate and proper method of enabling the religious public, by subscribing liberally to it, to afford substantial assistance to the family of this excellent man. The result was, that one of the members of the Society addressed a letter to Mr. Pearce's relations at Plymouth, requesting them to consult him, as he should be able to bear it, respecting the state of his manuscripts; and to inquire whether they were in a condition to admit of being finished by another hand: desiring them also to assure him, for his present relief concerning his dear family, that whatever the hand of friendship could effect on their behalf, should be accomplished. The answer, though it left no manner of hope as to the accomplishment of the object, yet is so expressive of the reigning dispositions of the writer's heart, as an affectionate husband, a tender father, a grateful friend, and a sincere christian, that it cannot be uninteresting to the reader:—

Tamerton, June 24, 1799.

"To use the common introduction of 'Dear brother,' would fall far short of my feelings towards a friend, whose uniform conduct has ever laid so great a claim to my affection and gratitude; but whose recent kindness, kindness in adversity, kindness to my wife, kindness to my children, kindness that would go far to

'smooth the bed of death,' has overwhelmed my whole soul in tender thankfulness, and engaged my everlasting esteem. I know not how to begin.....' Thought is poor, and poor expression.' The only thing that lay heavy on my heart, when in the nearest prospect of eternity, was the future situation of my family. I had but a comparatively small portion to leave behind me, and yet that little was the all that an amiable woman, delicately brought up, and, through mercy, for the most part comfortably provided for since she entered on domestic life, with five babes to feed, clothe, and educate, had to subsist on. Ah, what a prospect! Hard and long I strove to realize the promises made to the widows and the fatherless; but these alone I could not fully rest on and enjoy. For my own part, God was indeed very gracious. I was willing, I hope, to linger in suffering, if I might thereby most glorify him, and death was an angel whom I longed to come and embrace me, 'cold' as his embraces are. But how could I leave those who were dearest to my heart in the midst of a world, in which, although thousands now professed friendship for me, and, on my account, for mine; yet, after my decease, would, with few exceptions, soon forget my widow and my children, among the crowds of the needy and distressed. It was at this moment of painful sensibility that your heart meditated a plan to remove my anxieties; a plan too that would involve much personal labour before it could be accomplished. 'Blessed be God who put it into thy heart, and blessed be thou.' May the blessing of the widow and the fatherless rest on you and yours for ever. Amen and amen!

You will regret perhaps that I have taken up so much room respecting yourself; but I have scarcely gratified the shadow of my wishes. Excuse then, on the one hand, that I have said so much; and accept, on the other, what remains unexpressed.

My affections and desires are among my dear people

at Birmingham; and unless I find my strength increase here, I purpose to set out for that place in the course of a fortnight, or at most a month. The journey, performed by short stages, may do me good: if not, I expect when the winter comes to sleep in peace; and it will delight my soul to see them once more before I die. Besides, I have many little arrangements to make among my books and papers, to prevent confusion after my decease. Indeed, till I get home, I cannot fully answer your kind letter; but I fear that my materials consist so much in references, which none but myself would understand, that a second person could not take it up, and prosecute it. I am still equally indebted to you for a proposal so generous, so laborious.

Rejoice with me, that the blessed gospel still 'bears my spirits up.' I am become familiar with the thoughts of dying. I have taken my leave often of the world; and, thanks be to God, I do it always with tranquillity, and often with rapture. Oh, what grace, what grace it was that ever called me to be a christian! What would have been my present feelings, if I were going to meet God with all the filth and load of my sin about me! But God in my nature hath put my sin away, taught me to love him, and long for his appearing. O my dear brother, how consonant is everlasting praise with such a great salvation! S. P."

After this, another letter was addressed to Mr. Pearce, informing him more particularly, that the above proposal did not originate with an individual, but with several of the brethren who dearly loved him, and had consulted on the business; and that it was no more than an act of justice to one who had spent his life in serving the public; also requesting him to give directions by which his manuscripts might be found and examined, lest he should be taken away before his arrival at Birmingham. To this he answered as follows:—

Plymouth, July 6, 1799.

"I need not repeat the growing sense I have of your kindness, and yet I know not how to forbear.

I cannot direct Mr. K—— to all my papers, as many of them are in books from which I was making extracts; and if I could, I am persuaded that they are in a state too confused, incorrect, and unfinished, to suffer you or any other friend to realize your kind intentions.

I have possessed a tenacious memory. I have begun one part of the history; read the necessary books; reflected; arranged; written, perhaps, the introduction; and then, trusting to my recollection, with the revisal of the books as I should want them, have employed myself in getting materials for another part, &c. Thus, till my illness, the volumes existed in my head; my books were at hand, and I was on the eve of writing them out, when it pleased God to make me pause. and as close thinking has been strongly forbidden me, I dare say, that were I again restored to health, I should find it necessary to go over much of my former reading to refresh my memory."

As the manuscripts were found to be in such a state, that no person, except the author himself, could finish them, the design was necessarily dropped. The public mind, however, was deeply impressed with Mr. Pearce's worth, and that which the friendship of a few could not effect, has since been amply accomplished by the liberal exertions of many.

To Dr. Ryland, from Birmingham. July 20, 1799.

"Your friendly anxieties on my behalf demand the earliest satisfaction. We had a pleasant ride to Newport on the afternoon we left you, and the next day, without much fatigue, reached Tewkesbury; but the road was so rough from Tewkesbury to Evesham, that it wearied and injured me more than all the jolting we

had had before put together. However, we reached Alcester on Wednesday evening, stopped there a day to rest, and last night (Friday) were brought safely hither, blessed be God!

I find myself getting weaker and weaker, and so my Lord instructs me in his pleasure to remove me soon. You say well, my dear brother, that at such a prospect I 'cannot complain.' No, blessed be His dear name, who shed his blood for me, he helps me to rejoice at times with joy unspeakable. Now I see the value of the religion of the cross. It is a religion for a dying sinner. It is all the most guilty, the most wretched can desire. Yes, I taste its sweetness, and enjoy its fulness with all the gloom of a dying bed before me. And far rather would I be the poor emaciated and emaciating creature that I am, than be an emperor, with every earthly good about him, but without a God!

I was delighted the other day, in reperusing the Pilgrim's Progress, to observe, that when Christian came to the top of the hill Difficulty, he was put to sleep in a chamber called Peace. 'Why how good is the Lord of the way to me!' said I. I have not reached the summit of the hill yet, but, notwithstanding, he puts me to sleep in the chamber of Peace every night. ....True, it is often a chamber of pain; but let pain be as formidable as it may, it has never yet been able to expel that peace, which the great Guardian of Israel has appointed to keep my heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

I have been labouring lately to exercise most love to God when I have been suffering most severely: but, what shall I say? Alas! too often the sense of pain absorbs every other thought. Yet there have been seasons when I have been affected with such a delightful sense of the loveliness of God as to ravish my soul, and give predominance to the sacred passion. It was never till to-day that I got any personal instruction from our Lord's telling Peter by what death he should glorify

God. Oh what a satisfying thought it is, that God appoints those means of dissolution whereby he gets most glory to himself. It was the very thing I needed; for of all the ways of dying, that which I most dreaded was by a consumption (in which it is now highly probable my disorder will issue). But, O my dear Lord, if by this death I can most glorify thee, I prefer it to all others; and thank thee that by this mean thou art hastening my fuller enjoyment of thee in a purer world.

A sinless state! 'O 'tis a heaven worth dying for!' I cannot realize any thing about heaven, but the presence of Christ and his people, and a perfect deliverance from sin, and I want no more. I am sick of sinning: soon I shall be beyond its power.

'Oh joyful hour! Oh blest abode!
I shall be near and like my God!' "

To Mr. Birt, from Birmingham. July 26, 1799.

"I feel an undisturbed tranquillity of soul, and am cheerfully waiting the will of God. My voice is gone, so that I cannot whisper without pain; and of this circumstance I am at times most ready to complain. For, to see my dear and amiable Sarah look at me, and then at the children, and at length bathe her face in tears, without my being able to say one kind word of comfort,—Oh!! ..... Yet the Lord supports me under this also; and I trust will support me to the end.

S. P."

To Dr. Ryland, from Birmingham. Aug. 4, 1799.
Lord's-day Evening.

"Still, I trust, hastening to the land 'where there shall be no more curse,' I take this opportunity of talking a little with you on the road, for we are fellow-travellers; and a little conversation by the way will not deprive me of the privilege of getting first to the end of my journey.

It is seventeen years within about a week, since I first actually set out on my pilgrimage; and when I review the many dangers to which during that time I have been exposed, I am filled with conviction that I have all along been the care of omnipotent Love. Ah, how many Pliables, and Timorouses, and Talkatives have I seen, while my quivering heart said, 'Alas! I shall soon follow these sons of apostacy, prove a disgrace to religion, and have my portion with hypocrites at last.'

These fears may have had their uses, may have made me more cautious, more distrustful of myself, and kept me more dependent on the Lord. Thus

'All that I've met has work'd for my good.'

With what intricacy to our view, and yet with what actual skill and goodness, does the Lord draw his plans, and mark out our path! Here we wonder and complain. Soon we shall all agree that it was a right path to the city of habitation; and what we now most deeply regret shall become the subject of our warmest praises.

I am afraid to come back again to life. Oh how many dangers await me! Perhaps I may be overcome by some fleshly lust, perhaps I may get proud and indolent, and be more of the priest than of the evangelist: surely I rejoice in feeling my outward man decay, and having the sentence of death in myself. Oh what prospects are before me in the blessed world whither I am going! To be holy as God is holy, to have nothing but holiness in my nature, to be assured, without a doubt, and eternally to carry about this assurance with me, that the pure God looks on me with constant complacency, for ever blesses me, and says, as at the first creation, 'It is very good.' I am happy now in hoping in the divine purposes towards me; but I know, and the thought is my constant burden, that the Being I

love best always sees something in me which he infinitely hates. 'Oh wretched, wretched man that I am!' The thought even now makes me weep: and who can help it, that seriously reflects, he never comes to God to pray or praise, but he brings what his God detests along with him, carries it with him wherever he goes, and can never get rid of it as long as he lives! Come, my dear brother, will you not share my joy, and help my praise, that soon I shall leave this body of sin and death behind, to enter on the perfection of my spiritual nature; and patiently to wait till this natural body shall become a spiritual body, and so be a fit vehicle for my immortal and happy spirit!

But I must forbear, I have been very unwell all day; but this evening God has kindly given me a respite; my fever is low and my spirits are cheerful, so I have indulged myself in unbosoming my feelings to my dear friend.

S. P."

To Mr. Fuller, from Birmingham. Aug. 19, 1799.

The doctor has been making me worse and weaker for three weeks. In the middle of the last week he spoke confidently of my recovery; but to-day he has seen fit to alter his plans: and if I do not find a speedy alteration for the better, I must have done with all physicians, but Him who 'healeth the broken in heart.'

For some time after I came home, I was led to believe my case to be consumptive; and then, thinking myself of a certainty near the kingdom of heaven, I rejoiced hourly in the delightful prospect.

Since then I have been told that I am not in a dangerous way; and though I give very little credit to such assertions in this case, yet I have found my mind so taken up with earth again, that I seem as though I had another soul. My spiritual pleasures are greatly interrupted, and some of the most plaintive parts of the

most plaintive Psalms seem the only true language of my heart. Yet, 'Thy will be done,' I trust, prevails; and if it be the Lord's will that I linger long, and suffer much, O, let him give me the patience of hope; and still, his will be done. I can write no more. This is a whole day's work; for it is only after tea, that, for a few minutes, I can sit up, and attend to any thing."

From the latter end of August, and all through the month of September to the tenth of October, 1799, the day on which he died, he seems to have been unable to write. He did not, however, lose the exercise of his mental powers; and though in the last of the above letters he complains of darkness, it appears that he soon recovered that peace and joy in God, by which his affliction, and even his life, were distinguished.

A little before he died he was visited by Mr. Medley of London, with whom he had been particularly intimate on his first coming to Birmingham. Mr. Pearce was much affected at the sight of his friend; and continued silently weeping for nearly ten minutes, holding and pressing his hand. After this, he spoke, or rather whispered, as follows:—"This sick bed is a Bethel to me: it is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven. I can scarcely express the pleasures that I have enjoyed in this affliction. The nearer I draw to my dissolution, the happier I am. It scarcely can be called an affliction, it is so counterbalanced with joy. You have lost your pious father; tell me how it was." Here Mr. Medley informed him of particulars. He wept much at the recital, and especially at hearing of his last words, ... 'Home, Home!'..... Mr. Medley telling him of some temptations he had lately met with, he charged him to keep near to God. "Keep close to God (said he) and nothing will hurt you!"

MEMORANDA;

Taken down occasionally by Mrs. Pearce, within four or five weeks of Mr. Pearce's Death.

He once said, "I have been in darkness two or three days, crying, O when wilt thou comfort me? But last night the mist was taken from me, and the Lord shone in upon my soul. O that I could speak! I would tell a world to trust a faithful God. Sweet affliction, now it worketh glory, glory!"

Mrs. P. having told him the various exercises of her mind, he replied, "O trust the Lord: if he lifts up the light of his countenance upon you, as he has done upon me this day, all your mountains will become mole-hills. I feel your situation, I feel your sorrows; but He who takes care of sparrows, will care for you and my dear children."

When scorching with burning fever, he said "Hot and happy." One Lord's-day morning he said, "Cheer up, my dear, think how much will be said to day of the faithfulness of God. Though we are called to separate, he will never separate from you. I wish I could tell the world what a good and gracious God he is. Never need they who trust in him to be afraid of trials. He has promised to give strength for the day; that is his promise. Oh what a lovely God! and he is my God and yours. He will never leave us nor forsake us, no, never! I have been thinking that this and that medicine will do me good, but what have I to do with it? It is in my Jesus's hands; he will do it all, and there I leave it. What a mercy is it, I have a good bed to lie upon; you, my dear Sarah, to wait upon me; and friends to pray for me! Oh how thankful should I be for all my pains: I want for nothing: all my wishes are anticipated. O, I have felt the force of those words of David, 'Unless thy law (my gracious God!) had been my delights, I should have perished

in mine affliction.' Though I am too weak to read it, or hear it, I can think upon it, and oh how good it is! I am in the best hands I could be in; in the hands of my dear Lord and Saviour, and he will do all things well. Yes, yes, he cannot do wrong."

One morning Mrs. P. asked him how he felt. "Very ill, but unspeakably happy in the Lord, and my dear Lord Jesus." Once, beholding her grieving, he said, "O my dear Sarah, do not be so anxious: but leave me entirely in the hands of Jesus, and think, if you were as wise as he, you would do the same by me. If he takes me I shall not be lost; I shall only go a little before: we shall meet again never to part."

After a violent fit of coughing he said, "It is all well. Oh what a good God is he! It is done by him, and it must be well—If I ever recover, I shall pity the sick more than ever; and if I do not, I shall go to sing of delivering love; so you see it will be all well. O for more patience! Well, my God is the God of patience, and he will give me all I need. I rejoice it is in my Jesus's hands to communicate, and it cannot be in better. It is my God who gives me patience to bear all his will."

When, after a restless night, Mrs. P. asked him, what she should do for him, he said, "You can do nothing but pray for me, that I may have patience to bear all my Lord's will. After taking a medicine he said, "If it be the Lord's will to bless it, for your sake, and for the sake of the dear children..... but the Lord's will be done. O I fear I sin, I dishonour God by impatience; but I would not, for a thousand worlds, sin in a thought if I could avoid it." Mrs. P. replied, she trusted the Lord would still keep him; seeing he had brought him thus far, he would not desert him at last. "No, no (he said), I hope he will not. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Why do I complain? My dear Jesus's sufferings were much sorer and more bitter than mine;

And did he thus suffer, and shall I repine? No; I will cheerfully suffer my Father's will."

One morning, after being asked how he felt, he replied, "I have but one severe pain about me: what a mercy! Oh how good a God to afford me some intervals amidst so much pain! He is altogether good. Jesus lives, my dear, and that must be our consolation." After taking a medicine which operated very powerfully, he said, "This will make me so much lower; well, let it be. Multiply my pains, thou good God, so thou art but glorified, I care not what I suffer: all is right."

Being asked how he felt after a restless night, he replied, "I have so much weakness and pain, I have not had much enjoyment; but I have a full persuasion that the Lord is doing all things well. If it were not for strong confidence in a lovely God, I must sink; but all is well. O blessed God, I would not love thee less. O support a sinking worm! Oh what a mercy to be assured that all things are working together for good!"

Mrs. P. saying, If we must part, I trust the separation will not be for ever. "O no," he replied, "we sorrow not as those who have no hope." She said, "Then you can leave me and your dear children with resignation, can you?" He answered, "My heart was pierced through with many sorrows, before I could give you and the dear children up; but the Lord has heard me say, Thy will be done; and I now can say, Blessed be his dear name, I have none of my own."

His last day, October 10th, was very happy. Mr. P. repeated this verse,

'Since all that I meet shall work for my good,
The bitter is sweet, the med'cine is food;
Though painful at present, 'twill cease before long,
And then, oh how pleasant the conqueror's song!'

He repeated, with an inexpressible smile, the last line, "The conqueror's song!"

He said once, "O my dear! What shall I do? But why do I complain; He makes all my bed in my sickness." She then repeated those lines,

'Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are.'

"Yes," he replied, "He can, he does, I feel it."

CHAPTER V.—*General Outlines of his Character.*

To develope the character of any person, it is necessary to determine what was his governing principle. If this can be clearly ascertained, we shall easily account for the tenor of his conduct.

The governing principle in Mr. Pearce, beyond all doubt, was holy love.

To mention this, is sufficient to prove it to all who knew him. His friends have often compared him to that disciple whom Jesus loved. His religion was that of the heart. Almost every thing he saw, or heard, or read, or studied, was converted to the feeding of this divine flame. Every subject that passed through his hands seemed to have been cast into this mould. Things that to a speculative mind would have furnished matter only for curiosity, to him afforded materials for devotion. His sermons were generally the effusions of his heart, and invariably aimed at the hearts of his hearers.

For the justness of the above remarks I might appeal, not only to the letters which he addressed to his friends, but to those which his friends addressed to him. It is worthy of notice, how much we are influenced in our correspondence by the turn of mind of the persons we address. If we write to a humorous cha-

racter, we shall generally find that what we write, perhaps without being conscious of it, will be interspersed with pleasantries; or if to one of a very serious cast, our letters will be more serious than usual. On this principle it has been thought we may form some judgment of our own spirit by the spirit in which our friends address us. These remarks will apply with singular propriety to the correspondence of Pearce. In looking over the first volume of "Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Mission," the reader will easily perceive, the most affectionate letters from the missionaries are those which are addressed to him.

It is not enough to say of this affectionate spirit, that it formed a prominent feature in his character: it was rather the life-blood that animated the whole system. He seemed, as one of his friends observed, to be baptized in it. It was holy love that gave the tone to his general deportment: as a son, a subject, a neighbour, a christian, a minister, a pastor, a friend, a husband, and a father, he was manifestly governed by this principle; and that it was that produced in him that lovely uniformity of character, which constitutes the true beauty of holiness.

By the grace of God he was what he was; and to the honour of grace, and not for the glory of a sinful worm, be it recorded. Like all other men, he was the subject of a depraved nature. He felt it, and lamented it, and longed to depart that he might be freed from it: but certainly we have seldom seen a character, taking him altogether, "whose excellences were so many and so uniform, and whose imperfections were so few." We have seen men rise high in contemplation, who have abounded but little in action. We have seen zeal mingled with bitterness, and candour degenerate into indifference; experimental religion mixed with a large portion of enthusiasm: and what is called rational religion, void of every thing that interests the heart of man. We have seen splendid

talents tarnished with insufferable pride; seriousness with melancholy; cheerfulness with levity; and great attainments in religion with uncharitable censoriousness towards men of low degree; but we have not seen these things in our brother Pearce.

There have been few men in whom have been united greater portions of the contemplative and the active: holy zeal and genuine candour; spirituality and rationality; talents that attracted almost universal applause, and yet the most unaffected modesty; faithfulness in bearing testimony against evil, with the tenderest compassion to the soul of the evil doer; fortitude that would encounter any difficulty in the way of duty, without any thing boisterous, noisy, or overbearing; deep seriousness, with habitual cheerfulness; and a constant aim to promote the highest degrees of piety in himself and others, with a readiness to hope the best of the lowest; not "breaking the bruised reed," nor "quenching the smoking flax."

He loved the divine character as revealed in the Scriptures. To adore God, to contemplate his glorious perfections, to enjoy his favour, and submit to his disposal, were his highest delight. "I felt (says he, when contemplating the hardships of a missionary life), that were the universe destroyed, and I the only being in it besides God, he is fully adequate to my complete happiness; and had I been in an African wood, surrounded with venomous serpents, devouring beasts, savage men, in such a frame I should be the subject of perfect peace, and exalted joy. Yes, O my God! thou hast taught me that thou alone art worthy of my confidence; and with this sentiment fixed in my heart, I am freed from all solicitude about my temporal concerns. If thy presence be enjoyed, poverty shall be riches; darkness, light; affliction, prosperity; reproach, my honour; and fatigue, my rest."

He loved the gospel. The truths which he believed and taught dwelt richly in him, in all wisdom

and spiritual understanding. The reader will recollect how he went over the great principles of christianity, examining the grounds on which he rested, in the first of those days which he devoted to solemn fasting and prayer in reference to his becoming a missionary (see chap. ii. p. 33); and with what ardent affection he set his seal anew to every part of divine truth as he went along.

If salvation had been of works, few men, according to our way of estimating characters, had a fairer claim: but, as he himself has related, he could not meet the king of terrors in this armour (see chap. i. p. 11). So far was he from placing any dependence on his own works, that the more he did for God, the less he thought of it in such a way. "All the satisfaction I wish for here (says he) is to be doing my heavenly Father's will. I hope I have found it my meat and drink to do his work; and can set to my seal, that the purest pleasures of human life spring from the humble obedience of faith. It is a good saying 'We cannot do too much for God, nor trust in what we do too little.' I find a growing conviction of the necessity of a free salvation. The more I do for God, the less I think of it; and am progressively ashamed that I do no more."

Christ crucified was his darling theme, from first to last. This was the subject on which he dwelt at the outset of his ministry among the Coleford colliers, when "he could scarcely speak for weeping, nor they hear for interrupting sighs and sobs." This was the burden of the song, when addressing the more polished and crowded audiences at Birmingham, London, and Dublin; this was the grand motive exhibited in his sermons for the promotion of public charities; and this was the rock on which he rested all his hopes, in the prospect of death. It is true, as we have seen, he was shaken for a time by the writings of a Whitby, and of a Priestley; but this transient hesitation, by the over-ruling grace of God, tended only to establish

him more firmly in the end. "Blessed be his dear name, says he under his last affliction) who shed his blood for me. He helps me to rejoice at times with joy unspeakable. Now I see the value of the religion of the cross. It is a religion for a dying sinner. It is all the most guilty and the most wretched can desire. Yes, I taste its sweetness, and enjoy its fulness, with all the gloom of a dying bed before me; and far rather would I be the poor emaciated and emaciating creature that I am, than be an emperor, with every earthly good about him, but without a God."

Notwithstanding this, however, there were those in Birmingham, and other places, who would not allow that he preached the gospel. And if by the gospel were meant the doctrine taught by some well-known individuals, it must be granted he did not. If the fall and depravity of man operate to destroy his accountableness to his Creator; if his inability to obey the law, or comply with the gospel, be of such a nature as to excuse him in the neglect of either; or, if not, yet if Christ's coming under the law frees believers from all obligations to obey its precepts; if gospel invitations are addressed only to the regenerate; if the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit consist in revealing to us the secret purposes of God concerning us, or impressing us with the idea that we are the favourites of Heaven; if believing such impressions be christian faith, and doubting of their validity unbelief; if there be no such thing as progressive sanctification, or any sanctification inherent, except that of the illumination before described; if wicked men are not obliged to do any thing beyond what they can find in their hearts to do, nor good men to be holy beyond what they actually are; and if these things constitute the gospel, Mr. Pearce certainly did not preach it. But if man, whatever be his depravity, be necessarily a free agent, and accountable for all his dispositions and actions; if gospel invitations be addressed to men,

not as elect nor as non-elect, but as sinners exposed to the righteous displeasure of God; if Christ's obedience and death rather increase than diminish our obligations to love God and one another; if faith in Christ be a falling in with God's way of salvation, and unbelief a falling out with it; if sanctification be a progressive work, and so essential a branch of our salvation, as that without it no man shall see the Lord; if the Holy Spirit instruct us in nothing by his illuminating influences but what was already revealed in the scriptures, and which we should have perceived but that we loved darkness rather than light; and if he incline us to nothing but what was antecedently right, or to such a spirit as every intelligent creature ought at all times to have possessed, then Mr. Pearce did preach the gospel; and that which his accusers call by this name is another gospel, and not the gospel of Christ.

Moreover, if the doctrine taught by Mr. Pearce be not the gospel of Christ, and that which is taught by opposing writers and their adherents be, it may be expected that the effects produced will in some degree correspond with this representation. And is it evident to all men, who are acquainted with both, and who judge impartially, that the doctrine taught by Mr. Pearce is productive of hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, railings, evil surmisings, and perverse disputings? that it renders those who embrace it lovers of their ownselves, covetous, boasters, proud, false accusers, fierce, despisers of those that are good; while that of his adversaries promotes love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance?.....*"Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"*.....*"Ye shall know them by their fruits."*

Mr. Pearce's ideas of preaching human obligation may be seen in the following extract from a letter addressed to a young minister, who was sent out of the

church of which he was pastor:—"You *request my* thoughts how a minister should preach human *obligation*. I would reply, Do it extensively, *do it constantly*; but withal do it affectionately, and evangelically. I think, considering the general character of our hearers, and the state of their mental improvement, it would be time lost to argue much from the data of natural religion. The best way is, perhaps, to express duties in scripture language, and enforce them by evangelical motives; as the example of Christ, the end of his sufferings and death, the consciousness of his approbation, the assistance he has promised, the influence of a holy conversation on God's people, and on the people of the world, the small returns we at best can make for the love of Jesus, and the hope of eternal holiness. These form a body of arguments, which the most simple may understand, and the most dull may feel. Yet I would not neglect on some occasions to show the obligations of man to love his Creator, the reasonableness of the divine law, and the natural tendency of its commands to promote our own comfort, the good of society, and the glory of God. These will serve to illuminate; but, after all, it is the gospel of the grace of God that will most effectually animate, and impel to action."

Mr. Pearce's affection to the doctrine of the cross was not merely, nor principally, on account of its being a system which secured his own safety. Had this been the case, he might, like others whose religion originates and terminates in self-love, have been delighted with the idea of the grace of the Son; but it would have been at the expense of all complacency in the righteous government of the Father. He might have admired something which he accounted the gospel, as saving him from misery; but he could have discerned no loveliness in the divine law, as being holy, just, and good, nor in the mediation of Christ, as doing honour to it That which in his view con-

stituted the glory of the gospel was, that God is therein revealed as "the just God and the Saviour; just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

He was a lover of good men. He was never more in his element than when joining with them in spiritual conversation, prayer, and praise. His heart was tenderly attached to the people of his charge; and it was one of the bitterest ingredients in his cup, during his long affliction, to be cut off from their society. When in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, he thus writes to Mr. King, one of the deacons:—"Give my love to all the dear people. O pray that He who afflicts would give me patience to endure. Indeed, the state of suspense in which I have been kept so long requires much of it; and I often exclaim, ere I am aware, Oh my dear people! Oh my dear family! when shall I return to you again!" He was a dissenter and a baptist, from conscientious principles: yet he embraced with brotherly affection great numbers of godly men, whose sentiment differed from his own, both in and out of the establishment. His spirit was truly catholic: he loved all who loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. "Let us pray (said he, in a letter to a friend) for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper who love, not this part, or the other, but who love her, that is, the whole body of Christ."

He bare good will to all mankind. It was from this principle that he so ardently desired to go and preach the gospel among the heathen. And, even under his long affliction, when at times he entertained hopes of recovery, he would say, "My soul pants for usefulness more extensive than ever: I long to become an apostle to the world!" The errors and sins of men wrought much in him in a way of pity. He knew that they were culpable in the sight of God: but he knew also that he himself was a sinner, and felt that they were entitled to his compassion. His zeal for the divinity and atonement of his Saviour never

appeared to have operated in a way of unchristian bitterness against those who rejected these important doctrines; and though he was shamefully traduced by professors of another description, as a mere legal preacher, and his ministry held up as affording no food for the souls of believers; and though he could not but feel the injury of such misrepresentations, yet he does not appear to have cherished unchristian resentment; but would at any time have laid himself out for the good of his worst enemies. It was his constant endeavour to promote as good an understanding between the different congregations in the town, as the nature of their different religious sentiments would admit. The cruel bitterness of many people against Dr. Priestley and his friends, at and after the Birmingham riots, was affecting to his mind. Such methods of opposing error he abhorred. His regard to mankind made him lament the consequences of war: but while he wished and prayed for peace to the nations, and especially to his native country, he had no idea of turbulently contending for it. Though friendly to civil and religious liberty, he stood aloof from the fire of political contention.

In an excellent circular letter to the churches of the Midland Association, in 1794, he thus expresses himself: "Have as little as possible to do with the world. Meddle not with political controversies. An inordinate pursuit of these, we are sorry to observe, has been as a canker-worm at the root of vital piety, and caused the love of many, formerly zealous professors, to wax cold. The Lord reigneth; it is our place to rejoice in his government, and quietly wait for the salvation of God. The establishment of his kingdom will be the ultimate end of all those national commotions which terrify the earth. The wrath of man shall praise him; and the remainder of wrath he will restrain." From this time, more than ever, he turned his whole attention to the promotion of the

kingdom of Christ; cherishing and recommending a spirit of contentment and gratitude for the civil and religious advantages that we enjoyed. Such were the sentiments inculcated in the last sermon that he printed, and the last but one that he preached.* His dear young friends, who went to India, will never forget how earnestly he charged them by letter, when confined at Plymouth, to conduct themselves in all civil matters as peaceable and obedient subjects to the government under which they lived, in whatever country it might be their lot to reside.

It was love that tempered faithfulness with so large a portion of tender concern for the good of those whose conduct he was obliged to censure. He could not bear them that were evil, but would set himself against them with the greatest firmness; yet it was easy to discover the pain of mind with which this necessary part of duty was discharged. It is well remembered how he conducted himself towards certain preachers in the neighbourhood, who, wandering from place to place, corrupted and embroiled the churches; whose conduct he knew to be as dishonourable as their principles were loose and unscriptural; and when requested to recite particulars in his own defence, his fear and tenderness for character, his modest reluctance to accuse persons older than himself, and his deep concern that me engaged in the christian ministry should render such accusations necessary, were each conspicuous, and proved to all present, that the work of an accuser was to him a strange work.

It was love that expanded his heart, and prompted him to labour in season and out of season for the salvation of sinners. This was the spring of that constant stream of activity by which his life was distinguished. His conscience would not suffer him to decline what appeared to be right. "I dare not refuse," he would

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* See page 78, note.

say, "lest I should shrink from duty. Unjustifiable ease is worse than the most difficult labours to which duty calls." To persons who never entered into his views and feelings, some parts of his conduct, especially those which relate to his desire of quitting his country that he might preach the gospel to the heathen, will appear extravagant: but no man could with greater propriety have adopted the language of the apostle, "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause; for the love of Christ constraineth us."

He was frequently told that his exertions were too great for his strength; but such was the ardour of his mind, "He could not die in a better work." When he went up into the pulpit to deliver his last sermon, he thought he should not have been able to get through; but when he got a little warm, he felt relieved, and forgot his indisposition, preaching with equal fervour and freedom as when in perfect health. While he was laid aside, he could not forbear hoping that he should some time resume his delightful work; and, knowing the strength of his feelings to be such, that it would be unsafe to trust himself, he proposed for a time to write his discourses, that his mind might not be at liberty to overdo his debilitated frame.

All his counsels, cautions, and reproofs, appear to have been the effect of love. It was a rule dictated by his heart, no less than by his judgment, to discourage all evil speaking: nor would he approve of just censure unless some good and necessary end were to be answered by it. Two of his distant friends being at his house together, one of them, during the absence of the other, suggested something to his disadvantage. He put a stop to the conversation by answering, "He is here, take him aside, and tell him of it by himself: you may do him good."

If he perceived any of his acquaintance bewildered in fruitless speculations, he would in an affectionate

manner endeavour to draw off their attention from these mazes of confusion to the simple doctrine of the cross. A specimen of this kind of treatment will be seen in the letter, No. I., towards the close of this chapter.

He was affectionate to all, but especially towards the rising generation. The youth of his own congregation, of London, and of Dublin, have not forgot his melting discourses, which were particularly addressed to them. He took much delight in speaking to the children, and would adapt himself to their capacities, and expostulate with them on the things which belonged to their everlasting peace. While at Plymouth, he wrote thus to one of his friends: "O how should I rejoice, were there a speedy prospect of my returning to my great and little congregations!" Nor was it by preaching only that he sought their eternal welfare: several of his letters are addressed to young persons. See No. II. and III., towards the close of this chapter.

With what joy did he congratulate one of his most intimate friends, on hearing that three of the younger branches of his family had apparently been brought to take the Redeemer's yoke upon them. "Thanks, thanks, thanks be to God," said he, "for the enrapturing prospects before you as a father, as a christian father especially. What, three of a family! and these three at once! Oh the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of his unfathomable grace! My soul feels joy unspeakable at the blessed news. Three immortal souls secured for eternal life! Three rational spirits preparing to grace Immanuel's triumphs, and sing his praise! Three examples of virtue and goodness, exhibiting the genuine influence of the true religion of Jesus before the world! Perhaps three mothers training up to lead three future families in the way to heaven. Oh, what a train of blessings

do I see in this event! Most sincerely do I participate with my dear friend, in his pleasures and in his gratitude."

Towards the close of life, writing to the same friend, he thus concludes his letter:—"Present our love to dear Mrs. —— and the family, especially those whose hearts are engaged to seek the Lord and his goodness. O tell them they will find him good all their lives, supremely good on dying beds, but best of all in glory."

In his visits to the sick he was singularly useful. His sympathetic conversation, affectionate prayers, and endearing manner of recommending to them a compassionate Saviour, frequently operated as a cordial to their troubled hearts. A young man of his congregation was dangerously ill. His father, living at a distance, was anxious to hear from him; and Mr. Pearce, in a letter to the minister on whose preaching the father attended, wrote as follows:—"I feel for the anxiety of Mr. V——, and am happy in being at this time a Barnabas to him. I was not seriously alarmed for his son till last Tuesday, when I expected, from every symptom and the language of his apothecary, that he was nigh unto death. But to our astonishment and joy, a surprising change has since taken place. I saw him yesterday apparently in a fair way of recovery. His mind, for the first part of his illness, was sometimes joyful, and almost constantly calm; but when at the worst, suspicions crowded his mind; he feared he had been a hypocrite. I talked, and prayed, and wept with him. One scene was very affecting: both he and his wife appeared like persons newly awakened. They never felt so strongly the importance of religion before. He conversed about the tenderness of Jesus to broken-hearted sinners; and whilst we spoke, it seemed as though he came and began to heal the wound. It did me good, and I trust

was not unavailing to them. They have since been for the most part happy; and a very pleasant interview I had with them on the past day."

Every man must have his seasons of relaxation. In his earlier years he would take strong bodily exercise. Of late he occasionally employed himself with the microscope, and in making a few philosophical experiments. "We will amuse ourselves with philosophy, (said he to a philosophical friend,) but Jesus shall be our Teacher." In all these exercises he seems never to have lost sight of God; but would be discovering something in his works that should furnish matter for praise and admiration. His mind did not appear to have been unfitted, but rather assisted by such pursuits, for the discharge of the more spiritual exercises, into which he would fall, at a proper season, as into his native element. If in company with his friends, and the conversation turned upon the works of nature, or art, or any other subject of science, he would cheerfully take a part in it; and when occasion required, by some easy and pleasant transition, direct it into another channel. An ingenious friend once showed him a model of a machine which he thought of constructing, and by which he hoped to be able to produce a perpetual motion. Mr. Pearce having patiently inspected it, discovered where the operation would stop, and pointed it out. His friend was convinced, and felt, as may be supposed, rather unpleasant at his disappointment. He consoled him; and a prayer-meeting being at hand, said to this effect, "We may learn from hence our own insufficiency, and the glory of that Being, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working: let us go and worship him."

His mild and gentle disposition, not apt to give or take offence, often won upon persons in matters wherein at first they have shown themselves averse. When collecting for the Baptist Mission, a gentleman, who had no knowledge of him, or of the conductors of that

undertaking, made some objections, on the ground that the Baptists had little or nothing to say to the unconverted. This objection Mr. Pearce attempted to remove, by alleging, that the parties concerned in this business were entirely of another mind. "I am glad to hear it," said the gentleman, "but I have my fears." "Then pray, sir," said Mr. Pearce, "do not give till you are satisfied." "Why, I assure you," replied the other, "I think the Methodists more likely to succeed than you; and should feel more pleasure in giving them ten guineas, than you one." "If you give them twenty guineas, sir," said Mr. Pearce, "we shall rejoice in their success: and if you give us one, I hope it will not be misapplied." The gentleman smiled, and gave him four.

His figure, to a superficial observer, would, at first sight, convey nothing very interesting; but, on close inspection, his countenance would be acknowledged to be a faithful index to his soul. Calm, placid, and, when in the pulpit especially, full of animation, his appearance was not a little expressive of the interest he felt in the eternal welfare of his audience; his eyes beaming benignity, and speaking in the most impressive language his willingness to impart, not only the gospel of God, but his own soul also.

His imagination was vivid, and his judgment clear. He relished the elegancies of science, and felt alive to the most delicate and refined sentiments: yet these were things on account of which he does not appear to have valued himself. They were rather his amusements than his employment.

His address was easy and insinuating; his voice pleasant, but sometimes overstrained in the course of his sermon; his language chaste, flowing, and inclining to the florid: this last, however, abated as his judgment ripened. His delivery was rather slow than rapid; his attitude graceful; and his countenance, in almost all his discourses, approaching to an affection-

ate smile. He never appears, however, to have studied what are called the graces of pulpit-action; and, whatever he had read concerning them, it was manifest that he thought nothing of them, or of any other of the ornaments of speech, at the time. Both his action and language were the genuine expressions of an ardent mind, affected, and sometimes deeply, with his subject. Being rather below the common stature, and disregarding, or rather, I might say, disapproving every thing pompous in his appearance, he has upon some occasions been prejudged to his disadvantage: but the song of the nightingale is not the less melodious for his not appearing in a gaudy plumage. His manner of preparing for the pulpit may be seen in a letter addressed to Mr. C——, of L——, who was sent out of his church: and which may be of use to others in a similar situation. See No. IV., towards the close of this chapter.

His ministry was highly acceptable to persons of education: but he appears to have been most in his element when preaching to the poor. The feelings which he himself expresses, when instructing the colliers, appear to have continued with him through life. It was his delight to carry the glad tidings of salvation into the villages, wherever he could find access and opportunity. And as he sought the good of their souls, so he both laboured and suffered to relieve their temporal wants; living himself in a style of frugality and self-denial, that he might have wherewith to give to them that needed.

Finally, *He possessed a large portion of real happiness.* There are few characters, whose enjoyments, both natural and spiritual, have risen to so great a height. He dwelt in love: "and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Such a life must needs be happy. If his religion had originated and terminated in self-love, as some contend the whole of religion does, his joys had been not only of a

different nature, but far less extensive than they were. His interest was bound up with that of his Lord and Saviour. Its afflictions were his affliction, and its joys his joy. The grand object of his desire was to see the good of God's chosen, to rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and to glory with his inheritance. "What pleasures do those lose," says he, "who have no interest in God's gracious and holy cause!" *

If an object of joy presented itself to his mind, he would delight in multiplying it by its probable or possible consequences. Thus it was, as we have seen, in his congratulating his friend on the conversion of three of his children; and thus it was when speaking of a people who divided into two congregations, not from discord, but from an increase of numbers; and who generously united in erecting a new and additional place of worship:—"These liberal souls are subscribing," said he, "in order to support a religion, which, as far as it truly prevails, will render others as liberal as themselves."

His heart was so much formed for social enjoyment, that he seems to have contemplated the heavenly state under this idea with peculiar advantage. This was the leading theme of a discourse from Rev. v. 9—12, which he delivered at a meeting of ministers at Arnsby, April 18, 1797; and of which his brethren retain a lively remembrance. On this pleasing subject he dwells also in a letter to his dear friend Birt:—"I had much pleasure, a few days since, in meditating on the affectionate language of our Lord to his sorrowful disciples:—'I go to prepare a place for you.' What a plenitude of consolation do these words contain! What a sweet view of heaven as a place of society! It is one place for us all; that place where His glorified body is, there all his followers shall assemble, to part no more. Where he is, there we shall be also.

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* See the letter to Dr. Ryland, May 30, 1796, p. 47.

Oh, blessed anticipation! There shall be Abel, and all the martyrs; Abraham, and all the patriarchs; Isaiah, and all the prophets; Paul, and all the apostles; Gabriel, and all the angels; and above all, Jesus, and all his ransomed people! O, to be amongst the number! My dear brother, let us be strong in the Lord. Let us realize the bliss before us. Let our faith bring heaven itself near, and feast, and live upon the scene. Oh, what a commanding influence would it have upon our thoughts, passions, comforts, sorrows, words, ministry, prayers, praises, and conduct! What manner of persons should we be in all holy conversation and godliness!"

In many persons, the pleasures imparted by religion are counteracted by a gloomy constitution: but it was not so in him. In his disposition they met with a friendly soil. Cheerfulness was as natural to him as breathing; and this spirit, sanctified by the grace of God, gave a tincture to all his thoughts, conversation, and preaching. He was seldom heard without tears; but they were frequently tears of pleasure. No levity, no attempts at wit, no aiming to excite the risibility of an audience, ever disgraced his sermons. Religion in him was habitual seriousness mingled with sacred pleasure, frequently rising into sublime delight, and occasionally overflowing with transporting joy.

LETTERS REFERRED TO IN THIS CHAPTER.

No. I.—*To a young man, whose mind he perceived was bewildered with fruitless speculations.*

"The conversation we had on our way to ——, so far interested me in your religious feelings, that I find it impossible to satisfy my mind till I have expressed my ardent wishes for the happy termination

of your late exercises, and contributed my mite to the promotion of your joy in the Lord. A disposition more or less to 'scepticism,' I believe, is common to our nature, in proportion as opposite systems and jarring opinions, each supported by a plausibility of argument, are presented to our minds: and, with some qualification, I admit Robinson's remark, 'That he who never doubted never believed.' While examining the grounds of persuasion, it is right for the mind to hesitate. Opinions ought not to be prejudged any more than criminals. Every objection ought to have its weight; and the more numerous and forcible objections are, the more cause shall we finally have for the triumph, 'Magna est veritas et prevalebit' (Truth is great, and will prevail); but there are two or three considerations which have no small weight with me in relation to religious controversies.

The first is, The importance of truth. It would be endless to write on truth in general. I confine my views to what I deem the leading truth in the New Testament,—the atonement made on behalf of sinners by the Son of God; the doctrine of the cross; Jesus Christ and him crucified. It surely cannot be a matter of small concern whether the Creator of all things, out of mere love to rebellious men, exchanged a throne for a cross, and thereby reconciled a ruined world to God. If this be not true, how can we respect the Bible as an inspired book, which so plainly attributes our salvation to the grace of God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus? And if we discard the Bible, what can we do with prophecies, miracles, and all the power of evidence on which, as on adamantine pillars, its authority abides? Surely the infidel has more to reject than the believer to embrace. That book, then, which we receive, not as the word of man, but as the word of God; not as the religion of our ancestors, but on the invincible conviction which attends an impartial investigation of its evidences; that

book reveals a truth of the highest importance to man, consonant to the opinions of the earliest ages, and the most enlightened nations; perfectly consistent with the Jewish economy, as to its spirit and design; altogether adapted to unite the equitable and merciful perfections of the Deity in the sinner's salvation; and, above all things, calculated to beget the most established peace, to inspire with the liveliest hope, and to engage the heart and life in habitual devotedness to the interests of morality and piety. Such a doctrine I cannot but venerate; and to the Author of such a doctrine my whole soul labours to exhaust itself in praise.

'Oh the sweet wonders of the cross,
Where God my Saviour lov'd and dy'd!'

Forgive, my friend, forgive the transport of a soul compelled to feel where it attempts only to explore. I cannot on this subject control my passions by the laws of logic. 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord.'

Secondly, I consider man as a depraved creature; so depraved, that his judgment is as dark as his appetites are sensual; wholly dependent on God, therefore, for religious light, as well as true devotion: yet, such a dupe to pride, as to reject every thing which the narrow limits of his comprehension cannot embrace; and such a slave to his passions, as to admit no law but self-interest for his government. With these views of human nature, I am persuaded we ought to suspect our own decisions, whenever they oppose truths too sublime for our understandings, or too pure for our lusts. To err on this side, indeed, 'is human;' wherefore the wise man saith, 'He that trusteth to his own heart is a fool.' Should, therefore, the evidence be only equal on the side of the gospel of Christ, I should think, with this allowance, we should do well to admit it.

Thirdly, If the gospel of Christ be true, it should be heartily embraced. We should yield ourselves to its influence without reserve. We must come to a point, and resolve to be either infidels or christians. To know the power of the sun, we should expose ourselves to his rays: to know the sweetness of honey, we must bring it to our palates. Speculations will not do in either of these cases; much less will it in matters of religion. My son, saith God, give me thine heart!

Fourthly, A humble admission of the light we already have, is the most effectual way to a full conviction of the truth of the doctrine of Christ. 'If any man will do His will, he shall know of His doctrine whether it be of God.' If we honour God as far as we know his will, he will honour us with farther discoveries of it. Thus shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; thus, thus shall you, my dear friend, become assured, that there is salvation in no other name than that of Jesus Christ; and thus, from an inward experience of the quickening influences of his Holy Spirit, you will join the admiring church, and say of Jesus, 'This is my beloved, this is my friend; he is the chiefest among ten thousand, he is altogether lovely.' Yes, I yet hope, I expect to see you rejoicing in Christ Jesus; and appearing as a living witness that he is faithful who hath said—'Seek, and ye shall find; ask, and receive, that your joy may be full.'"

In another letter to the same correspondent, after congratulating himself that he had discovered such a mode of killing noxious insects as should put them to the least pain, and which was characteristic of the tenderness of his heart, he proceeds as follows:—"But enough of nature. How is my brother as a christian? We have had some interesting moments in conversation on the methods of grace, that grace

whose influence reaches to the day of adversity, and the hour of death; seasons when of every thing else it may be said, Miserable comforters are they all! My dear friend, we will amuse ourselves with philosophy, but Christ shall be our teacher; Christ shall be our glory; Christ shall be our portion. O that we may be enabled 'to comprehend the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge!'"

No. II.—*To a young Gentleman of his acquaintance, who was then studying Physic at Edinburgh.*

"Did my dear friend P—— know with what sincere affection and serious concern, I almost daily think of him, he would need no other evidence of the effect which his last visit, and his subsequent letters have produced. Indeed, there is not a young man in the world, in earlier life than myself, for whose universal prosperity I am so deeply interested. Many circumstances I can trace, on a review of the past fourteen years, which have contributed to beget and augment affection and esteem: and I can assure you that every interview, and every letter, still tend to consolidate my regard.

Happy should I be, if my ability to serve you at this important crisis of human life were equal to your wishes, or my own. Your situation demands all the aids which the wisdom and prudence of your friends can afford, that you may be directed not only to the most worthy objects of pursuit, but also to the most effectual means for obtaining them. In your professional character it is impossible for me to give you any assistance. If any general observations I can make, should prove at all useful, I shall be richly rewarded for the time I employ in their communication.

I thank you sincerely for the freedom wherewith you have disclosed the peculiarities of your situation, and

the views and resolutions wherewith they have inspired you. I can recommend nothing better, my dear friend, than a determined adherence to the purposes you have already formed, respecting the intimacies you contract, and the associates you choose. In such a place as Edinburgh, it may be supposed, no description of persons will be wanting. Some so notoriously vicious, that their atrocity of character will have no small tendency to confirm your morals, from the odious contrast which their practices present to your view Against these, therefore, I need not caution you. You will flee them as so many serpents, in whose breath is venom and destruction. More danger may be apprehended from those mixed characters, who blend the profession of philosophical refinement with the secret indulgence of those sensual gratifications, which at once exhaust the pocket, destroy the health, and debase the character.

That morality is friendly to individual happiness, and to social order, no man who respects his own conscience or character, will have the effrontery to deny. Its avenues cannot, therefore, be too sacredly guarded, nor those principles, which support a virtuous practice, be too seriously maintained. But morality derives, it is true, its best, its only support, from the principles of religion. 'The fear of the Lord,' says the wise man, 'is to hate evil.' He, therefore, who endeavours to weaken the sanctions of religion, to induce a sceptical habit, to detach my thoughts from an ever-present God, and my hopes from a futurity of holy enjoyment, he is a worse enemy than the man who meets me with the pistol and the dagger. Should my dear friend then fall into the company of those whose friendship cannot be purchased, but by the sacrifice of revelation, I hope he will ever think such a price too great for the good opinion of men, who blaspheme piety, and dishonour God. Deism is indeed the fashion of the day; and to be in the mode, you must quit the

good old path of devotion, as too antiquated for any but monks and hermits: so as you laugh at religion, that is enough to secure to you the company and the applause of the sons of politeness. O that God may be a buckler and a shield to defend you from their assaults! Let but their private morals be enquired into, and if they may have a hearing, I dare engage they will not bear a favourable testimony to the good tendency of scepticism; and it may be regarded as an indisputable axiom, that what is unfriendly to virtue is unfriendly to man.

Were I to argue *a posteriori*, in favour of truth, I should contend, that those principles must be true, which, first, corresponded with general observation—secondly, tended to general happiness—thirdly, preserved a uniform connection between cause and effect, evil and remedy, in all situations.

I would then apply these *data* to the principles held, on the one side, by the deists; and, on the other, by the believers in revelation. In the application of the first, I would refer to the state of human nature. The deist contends for its purity and powers. Revelation declares its depravity and weakness. I compare these opposite declarations with the facts that fall under constant observation. Do I not see that there is a larger portion of vice in the world than of virtue; that no man needs solicitation to evil, but every man a guard against it; and that thousands bewail their subjection to lusts, which they have not power to subdue, whilst they live in moral slavery, and cannot burst the chain? Which principle then shall I admit? Will observation countenance the deistical? I am convinced to the contrary; and must say, that I cannot be a deist without becoming a fool; and to exalt my reason I must deny my senses.

I take the second datum, and inquire which tends most to general happiness? To secure happiness, three things are necessary:—object, means, and

motives. The question is, Which points out the true source of happiness; which directs to the best means for attaining it; and which furnishes me with the most powerful motives to induce my pursuit of it? If I take a deist for my tutor, he tells me that fame is the object; universal accommodation of manners to interest, the means; and self-love the spring of action. Sordid teacher! From him I turn to Jesus. His better voice informs me, that the source of felicity is the friendship of my God; that love to my Maker, and love to man, expressed in all the noble and amiable effusions of devotion and benevolence, are the means; and that the glory of God, and the happiness of the universe, must be my motives. Blessed Instructor; thy dictates approve themselves to every illuminated conscience, to every pious heart! Do they not, my dear P——, approve themselves to yours?

But I will not tire your patience by pursuing these remarks. Little did I think of such amplification when I first took up my pen. O that I may have the joy of finding that these (at least well meant) endeavours to establish your piety have not been ungraciously received, nor wholly unprofitable to your mind! I am encouraged to these effusions of friendship by that amiable self-distrust which your letter expresses; a temper not only becoming the earlier stages of life, but graceful in all its advancing periods.

Unspeakable satisfaction does it afford me to find that you are conscious of the necessity of 'first' seeking assistance from Heaven. Retain, my dear friend, this honourable, this equitable sentiment. 'In all thy ways acknowledge God, and he shall direct thy paths.'

I hope you will be cautious in your intimacies. You will gain more by a half-hour's intercourse with God, than the friendship of the whole college can impart. Too much acquaintance would be followed with a waste of that precious time, on the present improvement of which your future usefulness and respectability

in your profession depend. Like the bee, you may do best by sipping the sweets of every flower; but remember, the sweetest blossom is not the hive."

No. III.—*To a young lady, at school, Miss. A. H., a daughter of one of the members of his church.*

"I cannot deny myself the pleasure which this opportunity affords me, of expressing the concern I feel for your happiness, arising from the sincerest friendship; a friendship, which the many amiable qualities you possess, together with the innumerable opportunities I have had of seeing them displayed, have taught me to form and perpetuate.

It affords me inexpressible pleasure to hear that you are so happy in your present situation; a situation in which I rejoice to see you placed, because it is not merely calculated to embellish the manners, but to profit the soul. I hope that my dear Ann, amidst the various pursuits of an ornamental or scientific nature which she may adopt, will not omit that first, that great concern, the dedication of her heart to God. To this, my dear girl, every thing invites you that is worthy of your attention. The dignity of a rational and immortal soul, the condition of human nature, the gracious truths and promises of God, the sweetness and usefulness of religion, the comfort it yields in affliction, the security it affords in temptation, the support it gives in death, and the prospect it opens of life everlasting; all these considerations, backed with the uncertainty of life, the solemnity of judgment, the terrors of hell, and the calls of conscience and of God, all demand your heart for the blessed Jehovah. This, and nothing short of this, is true religion. You have often heard, and often written on religion: it is time you should feel it now. Oh what a blessedness will attend your hearty surrender of yourself to the God and Father of men! Methinks I see all the angels of

God rejoicing at the sight, all the saints in heaven partaking of their joy; Jesus himself, who died for sinners, gazing on you with delight; your own heart filled with peace and joy in believing; and a thousand streams of goodness flowing from your renovated soul, to refresh the aged saint, and to encourage your fellow youth to seek first the kingdom of heaven, and press on to God. But oh! should I be mistaken! Alas, alas! I cannot bear the thought. O thou Saviour of sinners, and God of love! take captive the heart of my dear young friend, and make her truly willing to be wholly thine!

If you can find freedom, do oblige me with a letter on the state of religion in your own soul, and be assured of every sympathy or advice, that I am capable of feeling or giving. S. P."

No. IV.—*To a young minister, Mr. C—— of L——, on preparation for the pulpit.*

"Your first letter gave me much pleasure. I hoped you would learn some useful lesson from the first sabbath's disappointment. Every thing is good that leads us to depend more simply on the Lord. Could I choose my frames, I would say, respecting industry in preparation for public work, as is frequently said respecting christian obedience. I would apply as close as though I expected no help from the Lord, whilst I would depend upon the Lord for assistance, as though I had never made any preparation at all.

I rejoice much in every thing that affords you ground for solid pleasure. The account of the affection borne you by the people of God was therefore a matter of joy to my heart, especially as I learn from the person who brought your letter, that the friendship seemed pretty general.

Your last has occasioned me some pain on your account, because it informs me, that you have been 'ex-

ceedingly tried in the pulpit' : but I receive satisfaction again from considering, that the gloom of midnight precedes the rising day, not only in the natural world, but frequently also in the christian minister's experience. Do not be discouraged, my dear brother ; those whose labours God has been pleased most eminently to bless, have generally had their days of prosperity ushered in with clouds and storms. You are in the sieve ; but the sieve is in our Saviour's hands ; and he will not suffer any thing but the chaff to fall through, let him winnow us as often as he may. No one, at times, I think I may say, has been worse tried than myself, in the same manner as you express ; though I must be thankful it has not been often.

You ask direction of me, my dear brother. I am too inexperienced myself to be capable of directing others ; yet if the little time I have been employed for God has furnished me with any thing worthy of communication, it will be imparted to no one with more readiness than to you.

I should advise you, when you have been distressed by hesitation, to reflect, whether it arose from an inability to recollect your ideas, or to obtain words suited to convey them. If the former, I think these two directions may be serviceable :—First, Endeavour to think in a train. Let one idea depend upon another in your discourses, as one link does upon another in a chain. For this end I have found it necessary to arrange my subjects in the order of time. Thus, for instance, if speaking of the promises, I would begin with those which were suited to the earliest inquiries of a convinced soul ; as pardon, assistance in prayer, wisdom, &c. ; then go to those parts of christian experience which are usually subsequent to the former ; as promises of support in afflictions, deliverance from temptations, and perseverance in grace ; closing with a review of those which speak of support in death, and final glory. Then all the varieties of description

respecting the glory of heaven will follow in natural order; as the enlargement of the understanding, purification of the affections, intercourse with saints, angels, and even Christ himself, which will be eternal. Thus beginning with the lowest marks of grace, and ascending step by step, you arrive at last in the fruition of faith. This mode is most natural and most pleasing to the hearers, as well as assisting to the preacher: for one idea gives birth to another, and he can hardly help going forward regularly and easily.

Secondly, Labour to render your ideas transparent to yourself. Never offer to introduce a thought which you cannot see through before you enter the pulpit. You have read in Claude, that the best preparative to preach from a subject is to understand it: and I think bishop Burnet says, No man properly understands any thing, who cannot at any time represent it to others.

If your hesitation proceeds from a want of words, I should advise you—(1.) To read good and easy authors. (2.) To write a great part of your sermons, and for a while get at least the leading ideas of every head of discourse by heart, enlarging only at the close of every thought. (3.) Sometimes, as in the end of sermons, or when you preach in villages, start off in preaching beyond all you have premeditated. Fasten on some leading ideas; as, the solemnity of death, the awfulness of judgment, the necessity of a change of heart, the willingness of Christ to save, &c.: never mind how far you ramble from the point, so as you do not lose sight of it; and if your heart be any way warm, you will find some expressions then fall from your lips, which your imagination could not produce in an age of studious application. (4.) Divest yourself of all fear. If you should break the rules of grammar, or put in, or leave out a word, and recollect at the end of the sentence the impropriety; unless it makes nonsense, or bad divinity, never try to mend it, but let it pass. If so, perhaps only a few would notice it; but

if you stammer in trying to mend it, you will expose yourself to all the congregation.

In addition to all I have said, you know where to look, and from whom to seek that wisdom and strength which only God can give. To him I recommend you, my dear brother, assuring you of my real esteem for you, and requesting you will not fail to pray for the least of saints, but

Your's, affectionately, S. P."

Concluding Reflections.

The great ends of christian biography are instruction and example. By faithfully describing the lives of men eminent for godliness, we not only embalm their memory, but furnish ourselves with fresh materials and motives for a holy life. It is abundantly more impressive to view the religion of Jesus as operating in a living character than to contemplate it abstractedly. For this reason we may suppose the Lord the Spirit has condescended to exhibit first and principally the life of Christ; and after his, that of many of his eminent followers. And for this reason He, by his holy influences, still furnishes the church with now and then a singular example of godliness, which it is our duty to notice and record. There can be no reasonable doubt, that the life of Mr. Pearce ought to be considered as one of these examples. May that same divine Spirit, who had manifestly so great a hand in forming his character, teach us to derive from it both instruction and edification!

First, In him we may see the holy efficacy, and, by consequence, the truth of the christian religion. It was long since asked, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" This question contained a challenge to men of all religions who were then upon the earth. Idolatry had a great diversity of species: every nation

worshipping its own gods, and in modes peculiar to itself: philosophers also were divided into numerous sects, each flattering itself that it had found the truth; even the Jews had their divisions; their pharisees, sadducees, and essenes: but great as many of them were in deeds of divers kinds, an apostle could look them all in the face, and ask, "Who is he that overcometh the world?" The same question might be safely asked in every succeeding age. The various kinds of religions that still prevail: the pagan, mahometan, jewish, papal, or protestant, may form the exteriors of man according to their respective models: but where is the man amongst them, save the true believer in Jesus, that overcometh the world? Men may cease from particular evils, and assume a very different character; may lay aside their drunkenness, blasphemies, or debaucheries, and take up with a kind of monkish austerity, and yet all amount to nothing more than an exchange of vices. The lusts of the flesh will on many occasions give place to those of the mind; but to overcome the world is another thing. By embracing the doctrine of the cross, to feel not merely a dread of the consequences of sin, but a holy abhorrence of its nature; and by conversing with invisible realities, to become regardless of the best, and fearless of the worst that this world has to dispense; this is the effect of genuine christianity, and this is a standing proof of its divine original. Let the most inveterate enemy of revelation have witnessed the disinterested benevolence of a Paul, a Peter, or a John, and whether he would own it or not, his conscience must have borne testimony that this is true religion. The same may be said of Samuel Pearce: whether the doctrine he preached found a place in the hearts of his hearers or not, his spirit and life must have approved themselves to their consciences.

Secondly, In him we see how much may be done for God in a little time. If his death had been

foreknown by his friends, some might have hesitated whether it were worth while for him to engage in the work of the ministry for so short a period: yet if we take a view of his labours, perhaps there are few lives productive of a greater portion of good. That life is not always the longest which is spun out to the greatest extent of days. The best of all lives amounted but to thirty-three years; and the most important works pertaining to that were wrought in the last three. There is undoubtedly a way of rendering a short life a long one, and a long life a short one, by filling or not filling it with proper materials. That time which is squandered away in sloth, or trifling pursuits, forms a kind of blank in human life: in looking it over there is nothing for the mind to rest upon; and a whole life so spent, whatever number of years it may contain, must appear upon reflection short and vacant, in comparison of one filled up with valuable acquisitions and holy actions. It is like the space between us and the sun, which, though immensely greater than that which is traversed in a profitable journey, yet being all empty space, the mind goes over it in much less time, and without any satisfaction. If 'that life be long which answers life's great end,' Mr. Pearce may assuredly be said to have come to his grave in a good old age. And might we not all do much more than we do, if our hearts were more in our work? Where this is wanting, or operates but in a small degree, difficulties are magnified into impossibilities; a lion is in the way of extraordinary exertion; or, if we be induced to engage in something of this kind, it will be at the expense of a uniform attention to ordinary duties. But some will ask, How are our hearts to be in our work? Mr. Pearce's heart was habitually in his; and that which kept alive the sacred flame in him appears to have been—the constant habit of conversing with divine truth, and walking with God in private.

Thirdly, In him we see, in clear and strong colours,

to what a degree of solid peace and joy true religion will raise us, even in the present world. A little religion, it has been justly said, will make us miserable; but a great deal will make us happy. The one will do little more than keep the conscience alive, while our numerous defects and inconsistencies are perpetually furnishing it with materials to scourge us; the other keeps the heart alive, and leads us to drink deep at the fountain of joy. Hence it is, in a great degree, that so much of the spirit of bondage, and so little of the spirit of adoption, prevails among christians. Religious enjoyments with us are rather occasional than habitual; or if in some instances it be otherwise, we are ready to suspect that it is supported in part by the strange fire of enthusiasm, and not by the pure flame of scriptural devotion. But, in Mr. Pearce, we saw a devotion ardent, steady, pure, and persevering; kindled, as we may say, at the altar of God; like the fire of the temple, it went not out by night nor by day. He seemed to have learnt that heavenly art, so conspicuous among the primitive christians, of converting every thing he met with into materials for love, and joy, and praise. Hence he laboured (as he expresses it) "to exercise most love to God when suffering most severely;" and hence he so affectingly encountered the billows that overwhelmed his feeble frame, crying,

'Sweet affliction, sweet affliction,
Singing, as I wade to heaven.'

The constant happiness that he enjoyed in God was apparent in the effects of his sermons upon others. Whatever we feel ourselves, we shall ordinarily communicate to our hearers; and it has been already noticed, that one of the most distinguishing properties of his discourses was, that they inspired the serious mind with the liveliest sensations of happiness. They descended upon the audience, not indeed like a trans-

porting flood, but like a shower of dew, gently insinuating itself into the heart, insensibly dissipating its gloom, and gradually drawing forth the graces of faith, hope, love, and joy; while the countenance was brightened almost into a smile, tears of pleasure would rise, and glisten, and fall from the admiring eye.

What a practical confutation did his life afford of the slander so generally cast upon the religion of Jesus, that it fills the mind with gloom and misery! No: leaving futurity out of the question, the whole world of unbelievers might be challenged to produce a character from among them who possessed half his enjoyments.

Fourthly, From his example we are furnished with the greatest encouragement, while pursuing the path of duty, to place our trust in God. The situation in which he left his family, we have seen already, was not owing to an indifference to their interest, or an improvident disposition, or the want of opportunity to have provided for them; but to a steady and determined obedience to do what he accounted the will of God. He felt deeply for them, and we all felt with him, and longed to be able to assure him before his departure, that they would be amply provided for: but, owing to circumstances which have already been mentioned, this was more than we could do. This was a point in which he was called to die in faith: and indeed so he did. He appears to have had no idea of that flood of kindness, which, immediately after his decease, flowed from the religious public: but he believed in God, and cheerfully left all with him. "O that I could speak," said he to Mrs. Pearce, a little before his death, "I would tell a world to trust a faithful God. Sweet affliction; now it worketh glory, glory!" And when she told him the workings of her mind, he answered, "O trust the Lord! If he lift up the light of his countenance upon you, as he has done upon me this day, all your mountains will become molehills. I feel your situation: I feel your sorrows: but

He who takes care of sparrows, will care for you and my dear children."

The liberal contributions which have since been made, though they do not warrant ministers in general to expect the same, and much less to neglect providing for their own families on such a presumption; yet they must needs be considered as a singular encouragement, when we are satisfied that we are in the path of duty, to be inordinately "careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let our requests be made known unto God."

Finally, In him we see, that the way to true excellence is not to affect eccentricity, nor to aspire after the performance of a few splendid actions; but to fill up our lives with a sober, modest, sincere, affectionate, assiduous, and uniform conduct. Real greatness attaches to character, and character arises from a course of action. The solid reputation of a merchant arises, not from his having made his fortune by a few successful adventures; but from a course of wise economy and honourable industry, which, gradually accumulated, advances by pence to shillings, and by shillings to pounds. The most excellent philosophers are not those who have dealt chiefly in splendid speculation, and looked down upon the ordinary concerns of men as things beneath their notice; but those who have felt their interests united with the interests of mankind, and bent their principal attention to things of real and public utility. It is much the same in religion. We do not esteem a man for one, or two, or three good deeds, any farther than as these deeds are indications of the real state of his mind. We do not estimate the character of Christ himself so much from his having given sight to the blind, or restored Lazarus from the grave, as from his going about continually doing good.

These single attempts at great things are frequently the efforts of a vain mind, which pants for fame, and has not patience to wait for it, nor discernment to

know the way in which it is obtained. One pursues the shade, and it flies from him; while another turns his back upon it, and it follows him. The one aims to climb the rock, but falls ere he reaches the summit; the other, in pursuit of a different object, ere he is aware, possesses it: seeking the approbation of his God, he finds with it that of his fellow-christians.

HYMN IN A STORM.—By Rev. S. Pearce.

In the floods of tribulation,
  While the billows o'er me roll,
Jesus whispers consolation,
  And supports my sinking soul:
Thus the lion yields me honey,
  From the eater food is given,
Strengthen'd thus, I still press forward,
  Singing, as I wade to heaven,
Sweet affliction! Sweet affliction!
  That brings Jesus to my soul!

'Mid the gloom the vivid lightnings
  With increased brightness play;
'Mid the thornbrake beauteous flow'rets
  Look more beautiful and gay:
So in darkest dispensations,
  Doth my faithful Lord appear,
With his richest consolations,
  To re-animate and cheer.
Sweet affliction! Sweet affliction!
  Thus to bring my Saviour near!

Floods of tribulation heighten,
  Billows still around me roar,
Those who know not Christ ye frighten,
  But my soul defies your pow'r.
In the sacred page recorded,
  Thus his word securely stands,
"Fear not, I'm, in trouble, near thee,
  Nought shall pluck thee from my hands."
Sweet affliction! Sweet affliction!
  That to such sweet words lays claim!

All I meet I find assist me,
In my path to heavenly joy,
Where, though trials now attend me,
Trials never more annoy;
Wearing there a weight of glory,
Still the path I'll ne'er forget,
But, reflecting how it led me
To my blessed Saviour's seat—
Cry, Affliction! Sweet affliction!
Haste, bring more to Jesus' feet!

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1 COR. i. 2.

"Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours."

Sweet are the gifts which gracious Heav'n
On true believers pours;
But the best gift is, grace to know,
That Jesus Christ is *ours*.

Our Jesus! what rich drops of bliss
Descend in copious show'rs,
When ruined sinners such as we,
By faith can call him *ours*.

Differ we may in age and state,
Learning and mental pow'rs;
But all the saints may join and shout,
Dear Jesus! thou art *ours*.

Let those who know our Jesus not,
Delight in earth's gay flow'rs;
We, glorying in our better lot,
Rejoice that he is *ours*.

When hope, with elevated flight,
Tow'rds heav'n in rapture tow'rs,
'Tis this supports our vent'rous wing—
We know that Christ is *ours*.

Though providence, with dark'ning sky,
On things terrestrial lours,
We rise superior to the gloom,
When singing, Christ is *ours*.

Time, which this world, with all its joys,
With eager haste devours,
May take inferior things away,
But Jesus still is *ours*.

Haste then, dull time, and terminate
These slow revolving hours;
We wish, we pray, we long, we pant,
In heaven to call him *ours*.

THE GARDENER AND ROSE-TREE:

A FABLE,

Affectionately addressed to Mrs. J. H——, on the Death of her Child, by her truly sympathising friend,

S. P.

March 12, 1798.

In a sweet spot which wisdom chose,
Grew a unique and lovely Rose;
A flow'r so fair was seldom borne—
A Rose almost without a thorn.
Each passing stranger stopp'd to view,
A plant possessing charms so new.

"Sweet Flow'r!" each lip was heard to say—
Nor less the Owner pleas'd than they:
Rear'd by his hand with constant care,
And planted in his choice parterre,
Of all his garden this the pride,
No flow'r so much admir'd beside.

Nor did the Rose unconscious bloom,
Nor feel ungrateful for the boon;
Oft as her Guardian came that way,
Whether at dawn or eve of day,
Expanded wide—her form unveil'd,
She double fragrance then exhal'd.

As months roll'd on, the spring appear'd,
Its genial rays the Rose matur'd;
Forth from its root a shoot extends
The parent Rose-tree downward bends,
And with a joy unknown before,
Contemplates the yet embryo flow'r.

"Offspring most dear," she fondly said,
"Part of myself! beneath my shade
Safe shalt thou rise, whilst happy I,
Transported with maternal joy,
Shall see thy little buds appear,
Unfold, and bloom in beauty here.
What though the Lily or Jonquil,
Or Hyacinth no longer fill
The space around me—all shall be
Abundantly made up in thee.

"What though my present charms decay,
And passing strangers no more say
Of me, 'Sweet flow'r!' Yet thou shalt raise
Thy blooming head and gain the praise;
And this reverberated pleasure,
Shall be to me a world of treasure;
Cheerful I part with former merit,
That it my darling may inherit.
Haste then the hours which bid thee bloom,
And fill the zephyrs with perfume!"

Thus had the Rose-tree scarcely spoken,
Ere the sweet cup of bliss was broken.
The Gard'ner came, and with one stroke
He from the root the offspring took;
Took from the soil wherein it grew,
And hid it from the parent's view.

Judge ye who know a mother's cares
For the dear tender babe she bears,
The parent's anguish, ye alone
Such sad vicissitudes have known.

Deep was the wound, nor slight the pain,
Which made the Rose-tree thus complain:

"Dear little darling! art thou gone,
Thy charms scarce to thy mother known!
Remov'd so soon! So suddenly
Snatch'd from my fond maternal eye!
What hast thou done? dear offspring! say,
So early to be snatch'd away!
What, gone for ever! seen no more!
For ever I thy loss deplore!

Ye dews descend, with tears supply
My now for ever tearful eye;
Or, rather, come some northern blast,
Dislodge my yielding roots in haste.
Whirlwinds arise, my branches tear,
And to some distant region bear,
Far from this spot, a wretched mother,
Whose fruit and joys are gone together !"

As thus the anguish'd Rose-tree cry'd,
Her Owner near her she espy'd;
Who, in these gentle terms reprov'd
A plant, though murm'ring, still belov'd:

"Cease, beauteous flow'r, these useless cries,
And let my lessons make thee wise.
Art thou not mine? Did not my hand
Transplant thee from the barren sand,
Where once, a mean, unsightly plant,
Exposed to injury and want,
Unknown and unadmir'd, I found
And brought thee to this fertile ground;
With studious art improv'd thy form,
Secur'd thee from th' inclement storm,
And through the seasons of the year,
Made thee my unabating care?
Hast thou not blest thy happy lot,
In such an Owner—such a spot?
But now, because thy shoot I've taken,
Thy best of friends must be forsaken!
Know, flow'r belov'd, e'en this affliction,
Shall prove to thee a benediction;
Had I not the young plant remov'd,
So fondly by thy heart belov'd,
Of me thy heart would scarce have thought,
With gratitude no more be fraught:
Yea, thy own beauty be at stake,
Surrender'd for thy offspring's sake.
Nor think that, hidden from thine eyes,
The infant plant neglected lies;
No, I've another garden, where
In richer soil and purer air
It's now transplanted, there to shine
In beauties fairer far than thine.

" Nor shalt thou always be apart
From the dear darling of thy heart;
For 'tis my purpose thee to bear
In future time, and plant thee there,
Where thy now absent off-set grows,
And blossoms a celestial Rose.

" Be patient then, till that set hour shall come
When thou and thine shall in new beauties bloom:
No more its absence shalt thou then deplore,
Together grow, and ne'er be parted more."

These words to silence hush'd the plaintive Rose,
With deeper blushes redd'ning now she glows,
Submissive bows her unrepining head,
Again her wonted, grateful fragrance shed:
Cry'd, "Thou hast taken only what's thy own,
Therefore thy will, my Lord, not mine, be done."

PLAIN DEALING WITH A BACKSLIDING HEART.

Stupid soul! to folly cleaving,
Why has God no more thy heart?
Why art thou thy mercies leaving?
Why must thou with Jesus part?

Isthere in this world existing,
Aught with Jesus to compare?
Yea, can heaven itself produce one
Half so lovely, half so fair?

Ah! look back upon the season
When thy soul the Saviour chose
For thy portion, and thy spirit
Did with his salvation close.

Ah! remember thine espousals;
Didst thou not with Christ agree,
Leaving all thy former lovers,
His, and his alone, to be?

In his love thy pow'rs exulting,
What did all below appear?
Was there aught seem'd worth possessing,
Worthy of a hope or fear?

When thy heart, by grace instructed,
Learnt the world to disesteem,
And to Christ for all resorted,
Was there not enough in him?

Yes; thou know'st thy joyful spirit
Knew no unfulfill'd desire;
Longing still, and still receiving
Fuel for the heavenly fire.

Why then, tell me, now so lifeless?
Why this heav'nly fountain leave?
Why to broken cisterns seeking,
Cisterns that no water give?

Doth not disappointment follow
Every step that leads from God?
Have not piercing thorns and briers
Shown their points through all the road?

Recollect, 'tis thus the Saviour
Says he will thy soul reclaim,
With weeping and with supplication,
Humbly offer'd through his name.

A MORNING SONG.

God of our lives, our morning songs
To thee we cheerful raise;
Thine acts of love 'tis good to sing,
And pleasant 'tis to praise.

Guardian of man, thy wakeful eyes
Nor sleep, nor slumber know:
Thine eyes pierce through the shades of night,
Intent on all below.

Sustain'd by thee, our op'ning eyes
Salute the morning light;
Secure I stand, unhurt by all
The arrows of the night.

My life renew'd, my strength repair'd,
To thee, my God, due;
Teach me thy ways, and give me grace
My duty to pursue.

From ev'ry evil me defend,
But guard me most from sin;
Direct my going out, O Lord,
And bless my coming in!

O may thy holy fear command
Each action, thought, and word;
Then shall I sweetly close the day,
Approv'd of thee, my Lord.

AN EVENING SONG.

Author of life, with grateful heart,
My ev'ning song I'll raise;
But oh! thy thousand thousand gifts,
Exceed my highest praise.

What shall I render to thy care,
Which me this day has kept?
A thankful heart's the least return,
And this thou wilt accept.

Now night has spread her sable wings,
I would the day review;
My errors nicely mark, and see
What still I have to do.

What sins or follies, holy God,
I may this day have done,
I would confess with grief, and pray
For pardon through thy Son.

Much of my precious time I've lost;
This foolish waste forgive:
By one day nearer brought to death,
May I begin to live!

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MDZ Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum Digitale Bibliothek

Fuller, Andrew

Life of the Rev[erend] Samuel Pearce

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